

ITALY FROM  
DANTE TO TASSO



H·B·COTTERILL



945

C827

137584

BOOK 945.C827 c.1  
COTTERILL # ITALY FROM DANTE TO  
TASSO 1300-1600



3 9153 00020064 4











# **GREAT NATIONS**

**ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO**











da Vinci

Brage Photo

*Beatrice d'Este*



# ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO (1300-1600)

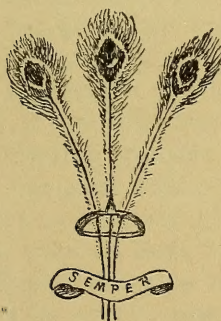
ITS POLITICAL HISTORY AS VIEWED FROM THE  
STANDPOINTS OF THE CHIEF CITIES WITH  
DESCRIPTIONS OF IMPORTANT EPISODES AND  
PERSONALITIES AND OF THE ART AND  
LITERATURE OF THE THREE CENTURIES

BY H. B. COTTERILL

Author of 'Ancient Greece' 'Medieval Italy' etc.

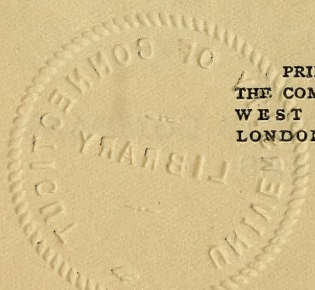
Editor of 'Selections from the Inferno' Virgil's  
'Aeneid' I and VI etc.

Translator of Homer's 'Odyssey'



NEW YORK  
FREDERICK A. STOKES COMPANY  
PUBLISHERS

~~945~~  
~~C827~~



PRINTED AT  
THE COMPLETE PRESS  
WEST NORWOOD  
LONDON, ENGLAND



## PREFACE

8/9/50  
7.50  
Shepherd  
THE scheme of this volume is similar to that of *Medieval Italy*. It necessitates a certain amount of discontinuity and repetition, which to a hurried reader may seem tiresome; but the subject is so immense and of such infinite detail that, like a great mountain, it needs to be viewed successively from a number of different standpoints. To each of the three parts into which the book naturally divides itself is prefixed an Historical Outline. These summaries, together with the Lists and Tables at the end of the volume, enable one to arrange in chronological order, and in due perspective, the contents of the chapters where I give more fully the history of the five chief cities, sketching with freer hand various interesting episodes and personalities, and show how the lives of the great artists and writers fit in with political events, and try to intimate what I believe to be the characteristics and the value of their works.

The Notes to the Illustrations give the needful information concerning the pictures, or refer to pages on which such information is given. Acknowledgment is also made of permission to reproduce photographs.

137584  
The three maps of Italy and the various plans given in this volume are sufficiently furnished with names and sufficiently accurate to serve all the purposes of a clue. Although the exact boundaries of Northern Italy in these ages are not discoverable (perhaps they were never very accurately determined and fluctuated considerably), it is interesting to note the fact, which of course nowise affects the question of national self-determination, that the boundaries of Northern and North-eastern Italy during these centuries, even long before Venice

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

had become a *terra ferma* Power, seem to have included at least the greater part of what lately has become *Italia redenta*. As for Dalmatia, after having belonged to Byzantines and having experienced a Norman invasion, it became a bone of contention during many years between Venice and Hungary, until about 1430, when most of it was conquered by the Turks.<sup>1</sup>

As for names, I have used such forms, Latin, Italian, and English, as came most naturally to me, and have sometimes even ignored the claims of consistency so far as to vary the form of the name of a person, place, or thing; for, as long as it is plain whom or what one means, the form of a name surely does not matter very much—unless indeed he was right who first asserted that Thucydides and Thoukudides were two different persons, or unless it was a just remark of an otherwise kindly critic of *Medieval Italy* that I have the ‘slovenly habit’ of using sometimes an Italian word to denote an Italian thing. To me it seems anything but a slovenly habit to differentiate multitudinous personalities by using diverse forms of the same name, as ‘Alexander VI’ and ‘Alessandro the Moor,’ ‘St Francis’ and ‘the church of S. Francesco,’ ‘Julius II’ and ‘Giulio Romano,’ ‘Clement VII’ and ‘San Clemente,’ ‘John XXII’ and ‘Giovanni Visconti,’ ‘St Catharine of Siena’ and ‘Caterina Sforza,’ ‘Pius II’ and ‘Pio Nono.’ The only case where I have deviated at all arbitrarily from ordinary English usage is, I think, that of Petrarca. This I have done not only because of euphony and long habit, but because ‘Petrarch’ is the only great Italian writer, with the possible exception of ‘Politian,’ whose Italian name we do not retain.

I do not venture to hope that my observations, and still less that my predictions, on political subjects will meet universal approval, but I feel assured that none of them will cause to flit across the face of Posterity any such smile as that which is to-day aroused by the comments on the battle of Pavia

<sup>1</sup> In *Inf.* ix Dante says that the Quarnaro near Pola ‘shuts in Italy and bathes its confines.’



## P R E F A C E

made by the justly celebrated German historian of the City of Rome, and by his prediction concerning Sedan and European supremacy which may be read on p. 473 of this volume.

I have resisted the temptation to give a list of all discoverable books that treat, more or less directly, any of the numerous themes touched upon in this volume. Many of the writers from whom I have taken my facts are mentioned in the text, or in the footnotes. Among these are, of course, the chief chroniclers, ancient and modern, of my period.

In regard to art and literature, although one may owe more than one thinks to many of the innumerable writers on such subjects, it is possible to form one's own opinions by studying originals, and to feel that a familiarity with great originals provides a fairly trustworthy basis for such opinions. And here I take the opportunity of expressing my gratitude to my friend the publisher of this book, who by suggesting that I should write it has once more incited and enabled me to widen and deepen my knowledge and my love of Italian art and literature, and to live for many months in the near presence of much that is supremely beautiful.

To Mr. C. C. Wood, moreover, I am indebted for an exceedingly conscientious reading of the proofs, and for his careful supervision in the matter of maps and plans and illustrations.

H. B. C.

VIAREGGIO, *May* 1919





# CONTENTS

## PART I

### IL TRECENTO

CHAPTER	PAGE
HISTORICAL OUTLINE	I
NOTE ON THE COMPAGNIE DI VENTURA, 17-19	
I. ROME AND THE PAPACY	20
THE COLONNA (Genealogical Table), 22	
COLA DI RIENZO, 32-49	
II. NAPLES	66
III. MILAN AND THE VISCONTI	78
IV. FLORENCE	89
V. VENICE	114
MARINO FALIERO, 120-124	
THE WAR OF CHIOGGIA, 126-131	
VI. LITERATURE	136
DANTE, 139-152	
PETRARCA, 152-167	
BOCCACCIO, 167-177	
VII. ART	178
PAINTING, 178-188	
SCULPTURE, 188-193	
ARCHITECTURE, 194-201	

## PART II

### IL QUATTROCENTO

HISTORICAL OUTLINE	203
I. ROME AND THE PAPACY	227
NICHOLAS V, 229-236	
SIXTUS IV, 240-244	
ALEXANDER VI, 246-255	
	ix

# ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

CHAPTER

PAGE

## II. NAPLES

256

JOANNA II, 259-265

THE ARAGONESE KINGS OF NAPLES, 267-276

## III. MILAN

277

THE RISE OF THE SFORZA, 279-283

THE AMBROSIAN REPUBLIC, 283-285

DUKE FRANCESCO SFORZA AND HIS SON, 285-289

LODOVICO II, MORO, 289-304

## IV. FLORENCE

305

THE RISE OF THE MEDICI, 306-309

COSIMO, PATER PATRIAE, 309-314

PIERO II, GOTTOSO, 314-315

LORENZO II, MAGNIFICO, 316-330

SAVONAROLA, 330-345

## V. VENICE

346

FRANCESCO FOSCARI, 349 sq.

CARMAGNOLA, 350-353

THE TWO FOSCARI, 355-357

CATERINA CORNARO, 358-359

NOTES ON VENETIAN QUATTROCENTO ART, 360-365

## VI. LITERATURE

366

THE CLASSICAL REVIVAL, 366-372

THE 'PLATONIC ACADEMY,' 372-376

THE NEW ITALIAN LITERATURE, 376 sq.

LEON BATTISTA ALBERTI, 378-382

PULCI AND BOIARDO, 382-386

POLIZIANO AND LORENZO II, MAGNIFICO, 386-393

## VII. ART

394

PAINTING, 395-414

(1) FLORENCE AND TUSCANY, 399 sq.

(2) UMBRIA AND THE MARCHE, 407

(3) VENICE AND PADUA, 409

(4) EMILIA AND LOMBARDY, 412

(5) ROME AND NAPLES, 413

SCULPTURE, 414-423

(1) FLORENCE AND TUSCANY, 414 sq.

(2) ROME AND NAPLES, 422

# CONTENTS

CHAPTER

PAGE

## VII. ART (*continued*)

### SCULPTURE (*continued*)

- (3) MILAN, 423
- (4) VENICE, 423

### ARCHITECTURE, 424-432

- (1) FLORENTINE BUILDERS, 424 *sq.*
- (2) LAURANA AT URBINO, 429
- (3) BRAMANTE OF URBINO AT MILAN, 429
- (4) THE CERTOSA OF PAVIA AND OTHER LOMBARD BUILDINGS, 430
- (5) VENETIAN QUATTROCENTO ARCHITECTURE, 430
- (6) FRA GIOCONDO OF VERONA, 432

## PART III

## IL CINQUECENTO

### HISTORICAL OUTLINE 435

### I. ROME AND THE PAPACY 449

- (1) JULIUS II, 449-457
- (2) LEO X, 457-462
- (3) CLEMENT VII AND THE SACK OF ROME, 462-469

### II. MILAN 470

- (1) THE BATTLE OF PAVIA, 470-473
- (2) FRANCESCO SFORZA II, 473-474
- (3) S. CARLO BORROMEO, 474-475

### III. FLORENCE 476

- (1) PIERO SODERINI, 476-481
- (2) THE RESTORED MEDICI, 481-484
- (3) THE SIEGE OF FLORENCE, 484-487
- (4) DUKE ALESSANDRO, 487-489
- (5) COSIMO I AND HIS SONS, 489-496

### IV. VENICE 497

- (1) FROM 1500 TO 1530, 498-504
- (2) THE TURKISH WARS, 504-508
- (3) NOTE ON VENETIAN CINQUECENTO ARTISTS, 508-510



# ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

CHAPTER

PAGE

## V. ART

511

### PAINTING, 511-544

#### CHARACTER OF ITALIAN CINQUECENTO PAINTING, 511-516

#### CINQUECENTO SCHOOLS OF PAINTING :

- (1) LOMBARDY, 516-517
- (2) SIENA, 517-518
- (3) FLORENCE, 518-520
- (4) ROME AND THE 'NATURALISTS' AND 'EC-  
LECTICS,' 520-523
- (5) PARMA (CORREGGIO), 523-525
- (6) VENICE, 525-530

LEONARDO DA VINCI, 530-533

FRA BARTOLOMEO, 533-536

RAPHAEL, 536-544

### SCULPTURE, 544-553

- (a) THE SANSOVINI, 545-546
- (b) BENVENUTO CELLINI, 546-547
- (c) GIAN DA BOLOGNA, 547-548
- (d) MICHELANGELO BUONARROTI, 548-553

### ARCHITECTURE, 553-561

#### CHARACTER OF ITALIAN CINQUECENTO ARCHITEC- TURE, 553-555

- (a) ROME, 555-557
- (b) NORTHERN ITALY, ESPECIALLY VENICE, 557-560
- (c) THE DECLINE, 560-561

## VI. LITERATURE

562

#### CHARACTER OF ITALIAN CINQUECENTO LITERATURE, 562-564

- (1) MACHIAVELLI, 564-569
  - (2) ARIOSTO, 569-571
  - (3) MICHELANGELO BUONARROTI, 571-574
  - (4) CASTIGLIONE AND THE CORTEGIANO, 574-583
  - (5) GUICCIARDINI, BANDELLO, BERNI, 583-584
  - (6) BENVENUTO CELLINI, 584-585
  - (7) TORQUATO TASSO, 586-589
-

# CONTENTS

	PAGE
DATES OF SOME OUTSTANDING EVENTS OF THE THREE CENTURIES	590
LISTS :	
(1) EMPERORS (' HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE '), 1300-1600	591
(2) THE PAPACY, 1300-1600	592
(3) VENETIAN DOGES, 1300-1600	593
GENEALOGICAL TABLES :	
I. KINGS OF FRANCE AND ENGLAND	594
II. KINGS AND QUEENS OF NAPLES :	
(a) ANGEVINS	595
(b) ARAGONESE	596
III. KINGS OF SICILY AND SPAIN	597
IV. THE VISCONTI OF MILAN	598
V. THE SFORZA OF MILAN	599
VI. THE EARLIER MEDICI	600
VII. THE LATER MEDICI	601
VIII. THE ESTE DYNASTY OF FERRARA	602
IX. THE GONZAGA DYNASTY OF MANTUA	603
X. THE DUKES OF URBINO	604
ITALIAN ARTISTS, 1300-1600 : DATES AND REFERENCES	605
CHIEF ITALIAN WRITERS, 1300-1600 : DATES AND REFERENCES	608
INDEX	609





# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

## MAPS AND PLANS

	PAGE
ITALY IN THE AGE OF DANTE	I
VENICE AND THE LAGUNES	130
THE CASENTINO	142
ITALY, c. 1400	202
ITALY, c. 1559	434
ROME, c. 1600	461
FLORENCE, c. 1600	479

## FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS

FIG.

### I. BEATRICE D'ESTE

#### *Frontispiece*

Portrait, in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana at Milan; probably of Beatrice d'Este, Duchess of Milan, by Leonardo da Vinci. (See Tables VIII and V and Index.) The 'ear and hand expert,' Morelli, and his followers, have attributed it to Ambrogio de Predis, a little-known painter attached to the Milanese court, and it is thought by some to represent Bianca, the illegitimate daughter of the Moro (see pp. 294 *n.*, 301), or Bianca Maria, his niece, who married the Emperor Maximilian (pp. 296 *n.*, 299 *n.*). But of the Empress an authenticated portrait by de Predis has been discovered and shows no similarity to this picture, whereas the features here depicted are, although less girlish, not unlike those of the fine bust by Cristoforo Romano, in the Louvre, and, although certainly more refined, seem to be of the same type as those presented by Solari's recumbent figure (Fig. 26) and by the portrait given in Fig. 25. Moreover, in a letter from Beatrice to

# ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

FIG.

PAGE

her sister Isabella she asks about a 'device of links' (or 'osier withes'?) with which she wished to decorate a dress to be worn at the wedding of the above-mentioned Bianca Maria. This *fantasia di vinci*, as she calls it, is conspicuous in our portrait, and, curiously enough, it appears not only as decoration in the Sforza Castello at Milan, on the adornment of which Leonardo da Vinci was employed, but also in certain old engravings that show the words *Accademia Leonardi Vinci*—perhaps the title of some school of painting founded by Leonardo. The name of the pattern, *fantasia di vinci*, very probably makes allusion to his birthplace, Vinci. It seems, therefore, reasonable to attribute the *fantasia*, and to re-attribute the picture, to him—as is done by some well-known later writers on art, such as Natali and Vitelli. *Photo Brogi.*

2. AVIGNON 28  
*Photo.*
3. PALAZZO VECCHIO, FLORENCE 29  
Begun about 1298. See p. 196. *Photo Brogi.*
4. DANTE 98  
Bronze bust, in the National Museum at Naples; the face apparently copied from the probably genuine death-mask of the poet in the National Museum (Bargello) at Florence, where is also the much repainted fresco-portrait attributed to Giotto. See p. 182 n. *Photo Brogi.*
5. SIR JOHN HAWKWOOD 99  
By Paolo Uccello. See p. 401, and for the famous English *condottiere* see Index. *Photo Alinari.*
6. PONTE VECCHIO, FLORENCE 112  
See p. 112 n.; and for the much later covered passage crossing the river by means of the bridge and connecting the Uffizi (and Palazzo Vecchio) with the Palazzo Pitti see p. 491 n. The bridges in the distance are the Ponte Santa Trinità and the Ponte alla Carraia (p. 98). *Photo Brogi.*
7. TOMB OF ANDREA DANDOLO 113  
See pp. 119-21. In the Baptistery of St. Mark's. *Photo Alinari.*
8. THE PALACE OF THE DOGES, VENICE 124  
See Index of *Medieval Italy* under 'Palaces,' and of this volume under 'Churches and other Buildings (Venice).' For the Gothic tracery see p. 201. *Photo Alinari.*

# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FIG.		PAGE
9.	TOMB OF GIAN GALEAZZO VISCONTI In the Certosa of Pavia. Begun in 1494 by order of Lodovico il Moro, but not finished till 1562. See pp. 85-88, 134, 209, 277, Fig. 49. <i>Photo Brogi.</i>	125
10.	PETRARCA'S HOUSE AT ARQUÀ See p. 161. <i>Photo Alinari.</i>	160
11.	(a) PETRARCA. (b) BOCCACCIO By Andrea del Castagno. In the Castagno Museum (formerly the Refectory of S. Apollonia) at Florence. See p. 402. <i>Photos Brogi.</i>	161
12.	GIOTTO'S CAMPANILE See pp. 184-5, 191, 197 <i>et al.</i> <i>Photo Brogi.</i>	184
13.	(a) FROM ANDREA PISANO'S BAPTISTERY DOOR The Baptism of Christ. See pp. 190-1. <i>Photo Brogi.</i> (b) ESPOUSAL OF THE VIRGIN, BY ORCAGNA See p. 193. <i>Photo Brogi.</i>	185 185
14.	(a) FROM Ghiberti's FIRST BAPTISTERY DOOR Christ walking on the Sea of Tiberias and Christ purging the Temple. See pp. 191, 417. <i>Photo Alinari.</i> (b) FROM Ghiberti's SECOND BAPTISTERY DOOR Moses on Sinai. See p. 417. <i>Photo Alinari.</i>	192 192
15.	CAMPO SANTO, PISA See pp. 187, 195 n., 403 <i>et al.</i> <i>Photo Brogi.</i>	193
16.	THE CATHEDRAL, FLORENCE See pp. 95 n., 192, 195-7, 230 n., 324 n., 425, 555. <i>Photo Alinari.</i>	196
17.	CÀ D'ORO, VENICE The 'Golden House'—so called from its, originally, gilded exterior, although perhaps its first name was Cà ( <i>i.e.</i> Casa) Doro, 'Doro's House.' It was built about 1435, one of the architects being Bartolomeo Buon, whose beautiful Porta della Carta (p. 431 n.) affords one of the first signs of Renaissance influence. See pp. 199, 361; and for the 'Doges' Palace tracery' see p. 201 and Fig. 8. <i>Photo Brogi.</i>	197



# ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

FIG.

PAGE

## 18. SULTAN MOHAMMED II

214

Captor of Constantinople in 1453. Painted by Gentile Bellini in 1480. Long in the collection of Sir H. Layard at Venice, and lately bequeathed to our National Gallery. See pp. 215, 233, 362-3. *Photo Alinari.*

## 19. FREDERICK III AND ELEONORA OF PORTUGAL

215

For the meeting of the Emperor and his bride-elect near Siena see p. 232. The fresco, by Pinturicchio, is in the Biblioteca Piccolomini, adjoined to the Siena Duomo. See pp. 239, 537. *Photo Brogi.*

## 20. POPE SIXTUS IV AND PLATINA

242

By Melozzo da Forlì. See pp. 239, 243, 244, 369. *Photo Brogi.*

## 21. POPE ALEXANDER VI

243

A fresco lunette by Pinturicchio and his pupils, in one of the Borgia Apartments of the Vatican. See p. 255. *Photo Alinari.*

## 22. (a) CESARE BORGIA

252

A fine portrait (at Forlì in Emilia) once attributed to Giorgione; but Morelli, followed by most experts of the day, holds that it has nothing to do with Giorgione or with Caesar Borgia. The features are, however, not unlike those given by an old engraving. *Photo Alinari.*

## (b) LUCREZIA BORGIA

252

A figure, believed to be a portrait of Lucrezia, in the *Disputa di S. Caterina*, a fresco by Pinturicchio in the Borgia Apartments of the Vatican. A lunette by the same painter over a door in one of these *Salae* represents the Virgin and Child surrounded by cherubs, and it is believed that the face of the Virgin is also a portrait of Alexander's notorious daughter. Vasari tells us that Pinturicchio painted a Virgin being adored by Pope Alexander, and that the Virgin was a portrait of his mistress, Giulia Farnese (p. 247), but in the above-mentioned lunette there is no adoring Pope. *Photo Brogi.*

## 23. ALFONSO'S TRIUMPHAL ARCH, NAPLES

253

See pp. 268, 423. Begun by Alfonso I, c. 1445, and finished by Ferdinand, c. 1470. The chief architects were probably the Milanese Pietro di Martino (p. 423) and Giuliano of Maiano (near Florence). There are marble reliefs and gates with bronze reliefs, the former repre-

# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FIG.		PAGE
	senting Alfonso's triumphal entry, and the latter Ferdinand's victories over the barons. Ferdinand is seen on his war-horse, 'his thin cruel face recognizable by the high nose,' says Mr. Norway in his <i>Naples Past and Present</i> , and his 'abominable' son, afterwards Alfonso II, with fat, round visage 'very falsely suggestive of kindness.' See pp. 269-70. <i>Photo Brogi.</i>	
24.	BARTOLOMEO COLLEONI, or COLLEONE	284
	By Verrocchio. See pp. 420, 421 n., 423, 531. The statue stands in front of the 'Westminster Abbey of Venice,' the church of SS. Giovanni e Paolo. <i>Photo Brogi.</i>	
25.	VIRGIN WITH LODOVICO, BEATRICE, AND SAINTS	285
	Perhaps by Zenale or de Predis. In the Brera. The children are the future Dukes Maximilian and Francesco (Table V). <i>Photo Brogi.</i>	
26.	MONUMENT OF LODOVICO AND BEATRICE	304
	In the Certosa of Pavia. These figures, by Cristoforo Solari (p. 607), were brought to the Certosa in 1564, when the tomb in S. Maria delle Grazie at Milan was demolished. This tomb was first erected by Lodovico soon after the death of Beatrice (Jan. 1497), and he gave orders that there should be carved also 'an effigy of himself in ducal crown and mantle, lying at his wife's side' (Mrs. Ady's <i>Beatrice d'Este</i> ). <i>Photo Alinari.</i>	
27. (a)	JOHN PALAEOLOGUS, BYZANTINE EMPEROR	305
	As depicted by Benozzo Gozzoli in his <i>Journey of the Magi</i> (Fig. 28 and p. 313).	
(b)	COSIMO IL VECCHIO	305
	By Pontormo (p. 607); evidently founded on earlier portraits. In Cosimo's cell in the convent of S. Marco (see p. 310) there is a replica, or copy, of Pontormo's panel, which is now in the Uffizi Gallery, as well as the older one of his father, Giovanni di Bicci (p. 309).	
(c)	GALEAZZO MARIA SFORZA	305
	By Piero Pollaiuolo (p. 606). 'The life-size portrait of Galeazzo Sforza,' says Mrs. Ady (Julia Cartwright) in her <i>Painters of Florence</i> , 'in his blue mantle sown with golden lilies, was painted by Piero when the prince visited Florence in 1471.' It hung in the Medici Palace for many years. See pp. 287-8.	

# ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

- | FIG.   | PAGE |
|--|------|
| 27. (d) PIERO 'THE UNFORTUNATE'  | 305  |
| <p>Son and successor of Lorenzo the Magnificent, expelled in 1494. See Index under 'Medici' and Table VI. The portrait, in the Uffizi Gallery, is said to be by Bronzino, but seems unworthy of him.</p>   |      |
| 28. THE JOURNEY OF THE MAGI, BY BENOZZO GOZZOLI  | 312  |
| <p>Part of the fresco in the chapel of the Medici (Riccardi) Palace, Florence. See p. 313 and Fig. 27 (a). <i>Photo Brogi.</i></p>   |      |
| 29. GIOVANNI, SON OF COSIMO IL VECCHIO   | 313  |
| <p>By Botticelli. See p. 404. Giovanni died in 1463, when Botticelli was only seventeen years old, and before old Cosimo had been given the title <i>Pater Patriae</i>, which is indicated on the medal in the picture. This has made some imagine that the picture does not represent Giovanni; and they even suggest Piero the Unfortunate—the foolish youth of Fig. 27 (d)—as the subject. The portrait has a decided resemblance to others of Giovanni, e.g. those in Fig. 28 and Fig. 31. <i>Photo Brogi.</i></p>   |      |
| 30. THE 'MAGNIFICAT' MADONNA, BY BOTTICELLI  | 316  |
| <p>See p. 404. The Virgin is represented as writing her Song of Praise, her hand being guided by the Child; two young angels hold a crown above her head. Of the three persons present at the scene the lower two are, I feel sure, meant as youthful portraits of Lorenzo and his brother Giuliano (with the well-known lock of hair on his forehead). The other may be a sister, and the Virgin may well be a youthful portrait of their refined and highly educated mother, Lucrezia Tornabuoni. Some imagine that the picture must belong to Botticelli's late period, when under the influence of Savonarola he confined himself to sacred subjects (see p. 404), but it seems much more likely that, as Natali and Vitelli assume, it was painted about 1472, soon after he left the tuition of Filippo Lippi. At that time Lorenzo was already a man of twenty-three, but the painter may have used and idealized earlier portraits. The glimpse of the Arno valley in the distance does not support Leonardo da Vinci's remark that Botticelli's scenery is always very sad. <i>Photo Brogi.</i></p> |      |
| 31. THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI, BY BOTTICELLI   | 317  |
| <p>Painted for the church of S. Maria Novella at the request of Lorenzo il Magnifico as a thank-offering for his escape from the daggers of the Pazzi conspirators (1478). The</p>   |      |



# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FIG.

PAGE

persons forming the group of the three kings and their attendants are all portraits. They include those of old Cosimo (making obeisance); his son, the gout-afflicted Piero, in a scarlet robe, who is turning round towards his brother Giovanni (dark and handsome, as in Figs. 28 and 29); and, standing behind them, dressed in black, Giuliano, Lorenzo's brother, who had lately been killed by the conspirators; and behind him, kneeling, is perhaps Nori (p. 325 *n.*). Lorenzo is to the left, near his horse. On the right, robed in a long yellow cloak, is Botticelli himself. See p. 316 *n.* *Photo Alinari.*

32. PALLAS AND THE CENTAUR, BY BOTTICELLI 328

See p. 330. *Photo Brogi.*

33. SAVONAROLA 329

By Fra Bartolomeo. In one of the three adjacent cells in the Convent of S. Marco which were used by Savonarola there are relics of the great Frate—his crucifix, hair-shirt, rosary, Dominican habit, etc. There is also this portrait, which is attributed to his devoted follower, Baccio della Porta, generally known as Fra Bartolomeo (p. 533). Vasari tells us that 'on account of the affection which Baccio had for Fra Girolamo (Savonarola) he made on a panel a portrait of him which was exceedingly fine. It was taken to Ferrara [Savonarola's home], but has lately returned thence to Florence and is in the house of Filippo Salviati.' The picture, which bears the inscription *Hieronymi Ferrariensis missi a Deo prophetae effigies*, is thought to have been copied from a medal, and doubts are expressed as to its authenticity. Some assert that the authentic portrait, on which the inscription was discovered painted over (after Savonarola's martyrdom), is existent at Prato, and that the one at S. Marco is a copy of it. *Photo Alinari.*

34. ENTRY OF CHARLES VIII INTO FLORENCE 338

By Granacci, a pupil of Ghirlandaio and of Filippino Lippi, who introduced him in one of the Carmine frescos (p. 400), and friend of Fra Bartolomeo and Michelangelo. This most interesting and historically important picture was not long ago purchased for the Uffizi Gallery from the Crespi Collection in Milan. The scene is the Via Larga—now Via Cavour (see p. 324). *Photo Brogi.*

35. THE ARSENAL, VENICE 339

Called also Arsenà or Arzanà (as in the celebrated description given by Dante in *Inferno*, xxi) or Dársena—as also the

# ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

FIG.

PAGE

old naval port is called at Genoa—the words meaning, in Arabic, the ‘workshop’ or ‘house of work.’ It was founded in 1104. About 1307 the docks were enclosed with their two-mile line of ramparts. Remains are to be seen of the *Bucintoro* (*Bucentaur*), the ancient state galley used by the Doges for the ceremony of ‘wedding Venice to the Adriatic’ (see *Medieval Italy*, p. 420). The marble lions that guard the entrance were brought from Greece about 1700. One dates undoubtedly from the age of great Greek sculpture, and probably sat on the end of one of the Long Walls overlooking the Peiræus and the Bay of Maráthon. *Photo Brogi.*

## 36. (a) TOMB OF TOMMASO MOCENIGO 350

(Doge of Venice 1414–23.) One of the many ducal tombs in SS. Giovanni e Paolo. The sculptors were Piero di Niccolò and Giovanni di Martino, both of Florence and of Donatello’s school (see p. 423). It is one of the latest Gothic tombs in Venice, and shows signs of transition to the Renaissance. Ruskin praises it warmly and calls it ‘a faithful and tender portrait.’ *Photo Alinari.*

## (b) TOMB OF ANDREA VENDRAMIN 350

(Doge of Venice 1476–78.) Also in SS. Giovanni e Paolo. Although Ruskin allows its beauty in workmanship and gives it the credit of being ‘the last monument that shows the recumbent figure laid in death’—and not ‘raised on its elbows and looking about’—he rails at it. To this ‘culminating point of the Renaissance’ he climbed by means of an ‘ancient ladder’ and discovered that ‘the wretched effigy was a mere block on the inner side’ (a state of things discoverable also in ancient Greek sculpture)—and he adds that the sculptor (that same Leopardi who, about 1493, cast, and set on a fine marble pedestal, Verrocchio’s *Bartolomeo Colleoni*, ‘perhaps the most glorious work of sculpture in the world’ according to the dictum of Ruskin himself) was ‘banished from Venice for forgery in 1478.’ To others this tomb seems exceedingly beautiful. *Photo Alinari.*

## 37. CATERINA CORNARO 351

By Tiziano. In the Uffizi Gallery. *Photo Brogi.*

## 38. MADONNA AND CHILD, BY MANTEGNA 362

In the grand Romanesque church of S. Zeno, Verona. The whole picture forms a great triptych. To the left are SS. Peter, Paul, John, and Augustine (the Elder); to the right, the Baptist, SS. Gregory, Laurence, and

# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FIG.		PAGE
	Benedict. This central portion is a fine example of Mantegna's love for classic and profuse ornamentation. <i>Photo Alinari.</i>	
39.	FEDERIGO DI MONTEFELTRO First Duke of Urbino. By the Umbrian painter Piero della Francesca, who was probably a teacher of Perugino and was doubtless frequently at Urbino in the days of (and before) Laurana and the young Bramante. The broken nose was, they say, the result of a tournament, in which the half of the face invisible in the picture was terribly damaged. The portrait, as well as that of the Duchess, is in the Uffizi Gallery. <i>Photo Brogi.</i>	363
40.	PRIMAVERA, BY BOTTICELLI See pp. 389-90. In the Accademia of Florence. <i>Photo Alinari.</i>	388
41.	MADONNA IN ADORATION, BY FILIPPINO LIPPI See p. 406 and n. In the Uffizi Gallery. <i>Photo Brogi.</i>	389
42.	THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI, BY GENTILE DA FABRIANO See p. 407. <i>Photo Brogi.</i>	408
43.	MADONNA AND SAINTS, BY GIOVANNI BELLINI Altar-piece; the Virgin enthroned amidst saints and angelic musicians. In the sacristy of the Frari church at Venice. See p. 362. <i>Photo Alinari.</i>	409
44.	ILARIA DEL CARRETTO, BY DELLA QUERCIA See pp. 415-6. Perhaps the first, and certainly the most beautiful, sculpture of the earliest period of the Renaissance. <i>Photo Alinari.</i>	414
45.	ST. GEORGE, BY DONATELLO See pp. 192-3 and n., 417-8 and n., 419 n. In 1304 the church Orsanmichele, in Florence, was burnt. In 1337 the rebuilding began. Orcagna ( <i>d.</i> 1368) and Taddeo Gaddi ( <i>d.</i> 1366) were among the architects, and while occupied with his splendid Tabernacle (begun in 1349) Orcagna probably made some of the Gothic niches for statues with which the new church was to be adorned exteriorly. Not, however, till 1404 did the Signoria (which had charge of the <i>exterior</i> of the church) commission the Guilds to supply statues within ten years' time. The Guild of Armourers and Swordmakers employed Donatello, whose statue was not ready till about 1416. It was placed on	415

# ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

FIG.

PAGE

the north side, and in course of centuries suffered so much from the weather that it was transferred to a niche on the south side belonging to the Guild of Doctors and Druggists (*Medici e Speziali*—the Guild of which Dante was a member), the Madonna statue which filled the niche, the work of an obscure Simone of Fiesole, having been removed into the church. As will be seen from the inscription, St George was standing in this niche when the photograph was taken, *i.e.* before 1891, in which year he was removed to the great Donatello Hall in the National Museum (Bargello), where he is ensconced in a niche similar to the original, which original niche is now filled by a bronze imitation of the original marble statue. *Photo Alinari.*

46. 'CANTORIA,' BY DONATELLO 418  
See p. 419. *Photo Brogi.*
47. (a) DAVID, BY DONATELLO 419  
In the Donatello Hall (Bargello). Probably the first modern statue in the sense of an independent work of art (1432). See p. 418 *and n.*; and remark the striking difference between this somewhat full-limbed, well-knit, muscular youth and the exceedingly spare and light-built form preferred by Verrocchio. See p. 420, and the observations on p. 550 concerning the *David* of Michelangelo. *Photo Alinari.*
- (b) DAVID, BY VERROCCHIO 419  
Made in 1476 for Lorenzo il Magnifico. In the Bargello (National Museum, Florence). In the same room are the bronze reliefs of *Abraham's Sacrifice* which Brunelleschi and Ghiberti sent in as competitors on the momentous occasion described on pp. 416, 425. *Photo Alinari.*
48. MADONNA AND CHILD, BY ANDREA DELLA ROBBIA 422  
In the National Museum, Florence. See pp. 419-20. *Photo Brogi.*
49. THE CERTOSA OF PAVIA 423  
See pp. 88, 289 *n.*, 430. *Photo Alinari.*
50. POPE JULIUS II 448  
Perhaps the most famous portrait in the world; of which there are in Florence, besides the wonderfully drawn cartoon in the Corsini Gallery (not allowed as genuine by many experts), two splendid specimens, identical in almost every detail but differing considerably in tone



# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FIG.

PAGE

and atmosphere. The one here reproduced is in the Pitti Gallery. If not by Raphael's hand it may be by that of Andrea del Sarto. Some regard it as a Venetian copy and consider the original portrait, by Raphael, to be that which is one of the chief treasures of the 'Tribuna' in the Uffizi Gallery. Vasari, who was two years old when Julius died, and wrote his *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects* about the middle of the Cinquecento, says of this wonderful portrait of the proud and domineering Pontiff that 'to look upon it made one afraid'—*temere*, not *tremere*, as often quoted—'just as if it were the living man himself'—*come se proprio egli fosse il vivo*. The London National Gallery possesses a copy which is attributed to Raphael but which may more probably be the work of a member of his school. *Photo Brogi*.

## 51. POPE LEO X AND CARDINALS 449

By Raphael. See pp. 458, 543. In the Pitti Gallery. The cardinal at his right hand is Giulio de' Medici, later Pope Clement VII. He is here clean-shaven. Later, as seen in medals and in his portrait by Sebastiano del Piombo at Parma (Pal. della Pilotta) and in Fig. 52, he grew a long beard—'in sign of mourning,' it is said, 'for his many calamities.' The other cardinal is Luigi de' Rossi. *Photo Brogi*.

## 52. POPE CLEMENT VII AND CHARLES V 468

By Vasari. In the Palazzo Vecchio. See preceding note. *Photo Brogi*.

## 53. (a) GIOVANNI DELLE BANDE NERE 469

See pp. 463, 471 n., 473, 489 n., and Table VII. After being wounded, at Pavia and again in opposing the Lutheran hordes (1526) on their way towards Rome, he had his leg badly amputated and died at Mantua. He was buried in the mausoleum of the Medicean princes at Florence. When the tomb was opened in 1857 the body was identified by the black armour and the absence of the leg. The portrait, by Tiziano, is in the Uffizi Gallery. It was probably painted at Giovanni's home, Reggio of Emilia, c. 1523. *Photo Brogi*.

## (b) IPPOLITO DE' MEDICI 469

One of Tiziano's finest portraits. In the Pitti. Ippolito is dressed in his favourite Hungarian costume. Painted probably at Bologna c. 1533, when he was about twenty-four years old. *Photo Brogi*.

# ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

FIG.

PAGE

54. COSIMO I 490  
 As Duke of Tuscany (p. 492). By Bronzino. In the Uffizi Gallery. *Photo Brogi.*
55. (a) FRANCESCO I 491  
 By Paolo Veronese. In the Pitti Gallery. He wears the Order of the Golden Fleece and a cross of the Order of the Cavalieri di S. Stefano (p. 493 n.). *Photo Brogi.*
- (b) BIANCA CAPPELLO 491  
 By Tiziano, who is said to have been a friend of her father at Venice. The original picture, once at the Torre al Gallo, near Florence—famous as Galileo's observatory—is said to have disappeared. *Photo Brogi.*
56. FERDINAND I 496  
 By Gian da Bologna. *Photo Brogi.*
57. SEBASTIANO VENIER 497  
 By Tintoretto. In the Uffizi Gallery. Venier was the Venetian admiral at Lepanto (1571), and in 1577 was elected Doge, but died the next year. *Photo Brogi.*
58. MOSES, BY MICHELANGELO 550  
 The only figure completed by Michelangelo for the huge monument of Pope Julius II. In the church of S. Pietro in Vincoli, Rome. From a certain point of view the drawn-back leg gives the impression that Moses is in the act of rising, in his wrath at the sight of the Golden Calf. The horns are due, it is said, to a mistranslation of Exodus xxxiv, 35. Unfinished figures intended for the monument are the four great 'Captives' now in the Florentine Accademia, the two 'Slaves' of the Louvre, and the *Genio della Vittoria* in the Bargello. *Photo Alinari.*
59. (a) GIULIANO DE' MEDICI 551  
 Duke of Nemours. By Michelangelo. In the New Sacristy of S. Lorenzo, Florence. See pp. 482 n. and 552, and Index under 'Medici.' Below, on the sarcophagus are the reclining figures of *Day* and *Night*. *Photo Brogi.*
- (b) LORENZO II DE' MEDICI 551  
 So-called Duke of Urbino. By Michelangelo. Also in the New Sacristy. See pp. 482-3 and 552. On the sarcophagus, in which was later deposited also the body of the half-mulatto Alessandro, recline the figures called *Twilight* and *Dawn*. *Photo Brogi.*

# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FIG.		PAGE
60.	ST. PETER'S <i>Photo Alinari.</i>	556
61.	LIBRERIA VECCHIA, VENICE <i>Photo Alinari.</i>	557
62.	MICHELANGELO BUONARROTI Said to be an <i>auto-ritratto</i> (painted by himself), but this is somewhat doubtful. In the Uffizi Gallery. <i>Photo Alinari.</i>	572
63.	ELISABETTA GONZAGA Duchess of Urbino. See pp. 576, 579 n., Tables IX and X. In the 'Tribuna' of the Uffizi Gallery. Evidently by a painter of the Paduan School; possibly by Mantegna himself, for he lived until 1506 and the action of Castiglione's <i>Cortegiano</i> takes place in March 1507. <i>Photo Brogi.</i>	573
64.	CASTIGLIONE By Raphael. In the Louvre. For Raphael and Castiglione at Urbino see pp. 537, 539, 577. <i>Photo Alinari.</i>	580
65.	TASSO By Alessandro Allori (1535-1607). In the Uffizi Gallery. <i>Photo Alinari.</i>	581

## ILLUSTRATIONS IN THE TEXT

COLA DI RIENZO	41
From a white marble relief formerly built into a wall inside the Palazzo Barberini, Rome, but lately transferred to the Palazzo Corsini, Florence, where by the courtesy of the owner I was allowed to examine it. The sculpture is very skilfully executed. It apparently dates from Renaissance days, and there is no actual proof that it is a copy of any contemporary portrait of Cola; but the wreath, the dress, and the face itself seem well in keeping with one's conception of the man during the first act of the drama—when he was about thirty-five years of age.	
DEVELOPMENT OF THE VENETIAN POINTED ARCH	200
CATERINA SFORZA	241
From the portrait by Vasari in the Palazzo Vecchio.	

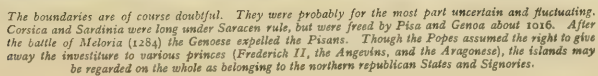
# ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

	PAGE
PAPAL ARMS	254
CHARLES VIII	295
'LE PALLE'	316
<p><i>I.e.</i> 'the Balls' (possibly originally <i>pills</i>, signifying the profession of the Medici). In the days of Giovanni di Bicci there were eight balls, red or in plain stone (earlier still there were nine, or even eleven). Cosimo P.P. had seven, red or plain—as seen on the Medici (Riccardi) Palace. Piero the Gouty had six red and one blue, which latter bore the <i>fleurs-de-lys</i> granted him by Louis XI (p. 314 <i>n.</i>). Lorenzo il Magnifico and later Medici (<i>e.g.</i> Popes Leo X and Clement VII) had five red and one blue with <i>fleurs-de-lys</i>.</p>	
PRIVATE CRESTS OF THE MEDICI	344
<p>See pp. 313, 330.</p>	
PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA	375
<p>From a portrait in the Uffizi.</p>	
RAPHAEL	538
<p>From the portrait by himself in the Uffizi Gallery.</p>	





## C 1300



# PART I

## IL TRECENTO

(1300-1400)

### HISTORICAL OUTLINE

(See Lists and Tables at end of volume)

IN *Medieval Italy* the narrative was brought down to the death of the Emperor Henry VII. Thirteen years before that event the Trecento had begun, and we find ourselves now in the transition period between the Middle and the Modern Age—a twilight spell, so to speak, between the first grey and the first gold of morning. By the year 1313 Dante, the last great medieval and the first great modern poet, has perhaps finished his *Inferno* and is toiling up the Purgatorial Mount towards the Earthly Paradise; Giotto 'has now the cry, so that his master's fame is growing dim'; Niccolò Pisano is dead, but his son Giovanni is still alive; Petrarca is a boy of nine; Boccaccio is a babe new-born, or near to birth.

The state of things political after the death of Henry was such as to inspire Italy with hope. The spectres of Germanic and papal supremacy which so long had haunted her as from side to side on her bed she turned to ward off her pain<sup>1</sup> had at last ceased to appear, and the dream of national unity soothed her sleep. The Imperialism of such mistaken patriots as Dante was beginning to sink into silence. His 'Two Suns' were no longer imaginable in heaven: the 'Empire' had withdrawn beyond the Alps and had become a term of contempt; the Papacy had deserted Italy and was playing at Avignon the paramour—*la puttana*—of the French Giant.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Purg.* vi, 150.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* xxxii, 150. See note on Dante's *De Monarchia* in *Medieval Italy*, p. 495. Machiavelli's political creed is a puzzle, but in his *Principe* he seems

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

This obscuration of Empire and of Papacy opened up a vision far more impressive—the constellation of Federation.

But Federation was to prove for the present unrealizable. Even if it had been in itself feasible, its development would have been probably arrested by adverse forces, such as were prevalent at Naples and Milan; but it was not feasible, for the Italian city-communes, like those of ancient Greece, were constituted on principles, and actuated by motives, inconsistent with true republican equality, and therefore fatal to the attainment of any such ideal.

That this was so we have already noted in the case of the Lombard cities, which after the overthrow of Barbarossa at Legnano (in 1176) might have consolidated their League into a permanent Federation; but rivalry and jealousy caused them, as Hallam says, to throw away the pearl of great price. And now that fortune again offered an opportunity we shall see how Pisa, Ferrara, Verona, and other cities—even Milan itself, the heroic champion of liberty against the German oppressor—in the passionate greed for supremacy over rivals entrusted their destinies to despotic war-lords and to foreign mercenaries; we shall see how in Venice the people was insidiously deprived of its rights until all political power lay in the hands of a close oligarchy; we shall see the Republic of Rome draw back through cowardice and jealousy and make the great refusal; we shall see how in Florence (and Florence was the leading Italian republic) the main drift of all the multitudinous social and political changes—most of which were hailed as tending towards liberty and equality—set steadily in the direction of class-tyranny. Indeed the nature of the Florentine Republic can be at once inferred from such class legislation as the so-called *Ordinamenti di Giustizia*, which deprived the

to regard Absolutism as a necessity for that Unity which would enable Italy to hold her own against the new Nations (Spain, France, and England), and even in the 18th century Muratori could speak of Henry VII as 'the fittest physician for the ills of Italy, had they been curable.' But the genius of Dante, even amid his Imperialistic fantasies, foresaw subconsciously (so to speak) the doom of Absolutism and the triumph of the Constitutional State or Federate Empire.



## HISTORICAL OUTLINE (1300-1400)

nobles entirely of the right of election to the Signoria, or from the *Legge dell' ammonire*, by which those suspected of disloyalty were 'warned,' or branded, and made political outlaws, liable to denunciation by the Parte Guelfa, an unconstitutional institution scarcely less formidable than the Inquisition itself, or the Venetian 'Ten.' As Machiavelli says,<sup>1</sup> it was in Florence not merely a struggle for a share in the government, but a continuous and savage fight for the *extermination* of social and political rivals; and the conflict was embittered and perpetuated by the pitiless resentment with which whole sections of the community were outlawed and regarded with the most malignant hostility,<sup>2</sup> to say nothing of the spiteful and foolish destruction of palaces and other property, or even of whole cities—a fate from which, after the battle on the Arbia, Farinata the Ghibelline only just succeeded in saving Florence.

But the characteristic of the Italian communes which was particularly fatal to their development into true republics, and consequently rendered vain all hope of Italian Federation, was the fact that there was no truly representative government. In Florence, for instance, as Villari says, 'the real citizenship, which gave the right to hold political office, remained a privilege conceded to a few, who even in the highly democratic epoch of 1494—after the banishment of the earlier Medici—did not much exceed 3000.' In other words, there was at Florence what at Venice was known as the *Serrata*—the limitation of governmental office to a relatively small class.<sup>3</sup> Lastly, one

<sup>1</sup> *Ist. Fior.* iii, 1. In this respect he well contrasts Florence with ancient Rome. It is true that secessions and other movements of the Roman *plebs* were sometimes occasioned rather by class than by political questions, but the Florentine *plebe* seems to have been actuated *always* far more by jealousy of their 'fatter' brethren than by a desire for self-rule.

<sup>2</sup> *E.g.* the decree condemning Dante to be burnt, if caught, and the shameful conditions of return which he so indignantly rejected.

<sup>3</sup> It may be interesting to note here that the ancient Roman citizenship, when it was full (*civitas optimo jure*), gave both *suffragium* and *honores*—both the suffrage and eligibility to office. Freedmen and country townspeople had generally *civitas non optimo jure*, which did not confer eligibility. There was a kind of *semi-civitas* called *Latinitas* (also one called *Peregrinitas*). The *civitas Romana* was latterly so lavishly conferred that in Justinian's time all subjects except slaves were *cives*.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

may point to the dictatorial authority of the Gonfalonieri di Giustizia, whose office was permanent though held only for two months by the same man. As commandant of a large body of armed men the Florentine Gonfaloniere (and the same happened with similar magistrates in other communes) became virtually the supreme head of the State, thus introducing an element of absolutism very inconsistent with true republican liberty and very likely to excite revolution and those democratic excesses which always pave the way for the despot.

The impotence of the Communes to unite Italy into a federate republic after the withdrawal of the Papacy and the Empire—the two *foci* of the orbit of medieval Italian history—causes their history during the Trecento to break up, as it were, into a number of fragmentary curves. Even in this brief preliminary sketch we shall have to treat separately, attempting only now and then to piece together, the stories of some of the free cities and of those ruled by despots, as well as the story of the Neapolitan kingdom and that of the Avignon Papacy.

\* \* \* \* \*

During more than a century after the death of Henry of Luxemburg more or less ridiculous *Römerzüge* were made by German potentates eager to receive the Imperial tiara at Rome from the Pope or the Roman people.<sup>1</sup> Henry's attempt had been serious and fully sanctioned by the Roman people, but the days of the medieval Germanic Holy Roman Empire were numbered—though it was still to haunt the earth as a troublesome phantom—and at the Emperor's death Italian Imperialism lost to a great extent its *raison d'être*. It is true that what still called itself Ghibellinism still flourished strongly in some quarters; the cities of Italy were still, as Dante lamented, 'full of tyrants'; but a Ghibelline was now by no means necessarily a favourer of alien domination; he was often, even though of Germanic descent, a zealous patriot. Being an aristocrat—perhaps even a despot—the 'Ghibelline'

<sup>1</sup> 'On March 18, 1452, the Romans saw for the last time a Pope crown an Augustus [Frederick III] in St. Peter's' (Gregorovius).

## HISTORICAL OUTLINE (1300-1400)

leader was naturally a bitter antagonist of all forms of republican liberty—which generally adopted the Guelf designation—and as it happened that for its own ends the Papacy<sup>1</sup> often sought the alliance of republics as well as that of kings and despots the old anti-papal Ghibellinism not only continued to exist, but was much reinforced by moral and patriotic indignation against the French Popes of Avignon. Bearing these modifications in view, and being prepared for all kinds of strange combinations, we can still use the terms 'Guelf' and 'Ghibelline' to denote the two camps into which, roughly speaking, Italy was divided after the death of Henry.

On the Ghibelline side were the following: (1) **Pisa**, from old times Imperialistic, and to the last a zealous supporter of Henry,<sup>2</sup> by whose help it hoped to recover from the crushing defeat inflicted by Genoa (1284) at Meloria. We shall see how Pisa's trust in alien princes was rewarded by the tyranny of Ghibelline despots, Uguccione and Castruccio, and by the loss of Sardinia, captured by the Aragonese in 1324. The Trecento saw the rapid decline of Pisa. It passed through the hands of Gian Galeazzo Visconti and in 1406 was sold to Florence, to which city it remained subject henceforth, except for one short interval. The story of Lucca is, as we shall see later, closely intertwined with that of Pisa. (2) **Milan**, the old Guelf city, now fallen under the despotism of Matteo Visconti, its first Signor, for whom see Chapter III. (3) **Verona**, where Dante's host, the 'gran Lombardo' Can Grande della Scala, had just succeeded to power. (4) **Sicily**, whose king, the Spaniard Frederic, was a great ally of the Emperor Henry VII and rival of the Angevin Robert of Naples.

On the Guelf side we have these: (1) The Avignon Pope, **Clement V**, and his successors. (2) **King Robert** of Naples and, later, his granddaughter Joanna. (3) **Florence**, which, though the champion of republican freedom, is soon to make

<sup>1</sup> Of the papal wolf, 'laden with all hungerings in her leanness' and 'hungrier after food than she was before,' Dante (or rather Virgil) says 'many are the animals with which she weds' (*Inf.* ii).

<sup>2</sup> For his tomb at Pisa see *Medieval Italy*, pp. 492, xxv.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

King Robert its Signor, and although nominally Guelf is to find itself at drawn daggers with the Papacy. (4) **Siena**, formerly a leading Ghibelline city and sharer in the great Ghibelline victory of Montaperti in 1260, but mastered by Charles of Anjou and forced by him and the Florentines to recall its Guelf *fuorusciti* and to join the Guelf League. After this it helps Florence to defy Henry VII and shares the Florentine defeat at Montecatini and remains a Guelf republic down to nearly the 16th century; but a strong Ghibelline element occasions many serious disorders, especially at the advent of some Germanic 'Roman Emperor.' (5) **Arezzo** (once strongly Ghibelline), **Volterra** (long a 'free city'), **S. Gimignano** and some other towns, harried by internal factions, came before the Trecento into collision with Florence and later in the century under its domination, and may therefore be classed among neutrals or Guelfs by compulsion. (6) **Rome** just at the time of Henry's death was under Orsini and Guelf influences, and had as its supreme magistrate King Robert's senatorial Vicar. The subsequent melodramatic changes in its political history are related in Chapter I.

**Venice** and **Genoa**, the two great maritime rivals, stood at this epoch somewhat apart from the political movements of the rest of Italy. By the naval victories of Meloria (1284) and Curzola (1298) Genoa had crushed Pisa and had for a time exorcized the Venetian peril. The immense wealth and influence of the Genoese merchant princes tended naturally towards oligarchy and Ghibellinism rather than to Guelfism; but, as has been explained, these terms adopted by rival families had now little political or ecclesiastical meaning.<sup>1</sup> At the coming of Henry VII Genoa professed Imperialism and accepted as Imperial Vicar the notorious Ugucione della Faggiuola. In 1339 the Genoese people succeeded in obtaining a constitution, but though their Doge was vested with an empty form of almost absolute power the factions among the nobles increased in virulence. Later, as we shall see in Chapters III and V, the

<sup>1</sup> The Doria family headed the Ghibellines. Among the Guelfs were the Grimaldi and Fieschi.



## HISTORICAL OUTLINE (1300-1400)

city, alarmed by a serious defeat of its fleet by the Venetians, gave itself over for a time to Milan. As regards **Venice**, it was not until about 1330 that it began to take a part in mainland politics, so that we may defer notice of it till then. Here we need only note that shortly before the death of Henry VII the Venetian constitution had, by the closure (*serrata*) of its Greater Council and by the institution of the 'Ten' (after the serious conspiracy of Tiepolo in 1310), reached full development as an oligarchy, or perhaps we may say as a patrician republic.

Lastly, there was aristocratic Ferrara, where the Teutonic Margraves of the house of Este had held sway since about 1100; and Mantua, where quite lately a Bonaccolsi had attained almost absolute power as Capitano del Popolo, and was soon to be murdered by the first of the Gonzaga dynasty. There was Padua, Guef in sentiment, which some sixty years after liberating itself from the ferocious Ezzelino gave itself over (1318) to a Signor—Jacopo da Carrara. There was Bologna, originally a leading member of the Lombard League, and a 'free city,' celebrated for its great university and distinguished by the capture and captivity of the Imperial prince Enzo,<sup>1</sup> but now doomed to suffer as a miserable bone of contention in the bloody conflicts between the Popes and the Visconti, and ere long to come under the despotism of the Bentivogli.

Having now glanced at our *dramatis personae* let us consider very briefly the main action of the first part of our trilogy—the general movement of events of *national* importance from 1313 to 1400. The best way of presenting these multitudinous events so as to show their interaction and, so to speak, the general drift of the play will perhaps be to put them on the stage in three fairly short scenes, each covering a few decades. These will serve as framework for the detailed accounts of the chief cities given in later chapters.

### 1313-1330

Firstly let us take the so-called **Empire**. On the death of Henry VII his son, King John of Bohemia, was passed over by

<sup>1</sup> See *Medieval Italy*, p. 467.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

the Electors and the Imperial title was claimed by two rivals, Ludwig of Bavaria and Frederick of Austria.<sup>1</sup> Civil war went on till 1322, when the victory of Mühldorf decided the matter in favour of Ludwig, who soon prepared to descend into Italy, 'to wrest,' as he said, 'from foreign usurpers'—such as the Visconti of Milan and the King of Naples—'the rights of the Empire and the Signory of the world [!] which the Germans had won by shedding torrents of their noble blood.'<sup>2</sup> Now the Avignon Pope, Clement V, that Gascon 'pastor without law,' had at first recognized neither claimant, but had himself claimed to have 'received from God all rights over the worldly as well as the spiritual Empire,' and had instituted King Robert as his Imperial Vicar in Italy; and his policy had been followed by his successor, John XXII. That Pope, however, finally adopted the cause of Frederick; thus, as soon as Ludwig prepared to cross the Alps he was excommunicated. But with only about 600 horsemen he reached Trento, where he was met by the three Visconti, by Can Grande, the Estensi of Ferrara, Castruccio, and other Italian Ghibelline chiefs. Joined by considerable forces he pushed on to Milan and there assumed the Iron Crown (May 1327); but suspecting treason he seized and imprisoned his hosts the Visconti. Then, having made Castruccio Imperial Vicar of Pisa and Duke of Lucca and Pistoia, he set forth for Rome. Here, after being crowned (January 1328) as Emperor by Sciarra Colonna, the Captain of the People, and by two schismatic bishops, he solemnly deposed and burnt in effigy the Avignon Pope and elected an Antipope (the so-called Nicholas V). But money and men failed him for his intended attack on King Robert of Naples, and amid insults and imprecations he left Rome and, after having pocketed enormous bribes for liberating Azzo Visconti from prison, for creating the assassin Lodovico Gonzaga Imperial Vicar of Mantua, and for selling the sovereignty of Lucca to an enemy of Castruccio—who had lately died and had left the

<sup>1</sup> Son of that Kaiser Albrecht who was murdered by his nephew John the Parricide in 1308.

<sup>2</sup> Gregorovius, the German, quotes this with complacency.

## HISTORICAL OUTLINE (1300-1400)

city to his own son—he resought (December 1329) his native wilds beyond the Alps, ‘leaving behind him,’ as says Muratori, ‘an abominable memory among the Guelfs, and perhaps not less among the Ghibellines.’

Secondly, let us take **Florence** and **Pisa**. Readers of *Medieval Italy* may remember that at the beginning of the century the Neri (ultra-Guelfs), with the help of Charles of Valois and headed by Corso Donati, had expelled the Bianchi (the disaffected Guelfs), among whom was the poet Dante. Then, in 1308, the people rose against Corso Donati; he was killed and the Guelf republican government was confirmed. In 1312 the city offered a splendid defiance to Henry VII, who vainly attempted its capture before starting on his fatal return march towards Rome. But Henry had powerful Ghibelline friends in Italy who, after his death, continued to threaten Florence very seriously—so seriously that the Florentines put themselves under the protection of Naples.

The first of these adversaries was Uguccone della Faggiuola, whom Henry had made Imperial Vicar of Genoa. Now on Henry’s death his ally, King Frederic of Sicily, had hastened to Pisa with his fleet to induce Henry’s German troops to march south again and attack Robert of Naples; but the Germans refused,<sup>1</sup> and Frederic on his part refused to accept the Signory of Pisa and to defend it against its enemies. So the Pisans nominated Uguccone as their *Podestà*, and in a short time he assumed the lead of the Ghibellines, made himself master of Lucca, and in 1315 he routed the Florentines and their Guelf allies with great slaughter at Montecatini.<sup>2</sup> But, finding his arrogance intolerable, the Pisans and Lucchesi soon afterwards expelled him. Probably induced by Dante, who was at this time at the court of Can Grande della Scala,

<sup>1</sup> Some went off to Germany. About a thousand remained and, after serving Uguccone, formed one of the earliest of those *Bande* or *Compagnie di ventura* which proved such a bane to Italy.

<sup>2</sup> Between Lucca and Pistoia. Dante was perhaps at Lucca in this year. He nowhere mentions the battle. For his friendship with Uguccone see Chapter VI. He was later at Verona and then at Ravenna, where he died in 1321.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

the lord of Verona, he withdrew thither. Three years later he died at Vicenza.

Then arose another dangerous foe of Florence, of whom we have already heard—Castruccio Castracane. He belonged to the great Lucchese family of Antelminelli. When young he had been exiled, and had served in England under Edward I. At Lucca he had been imprisoned and sentenced to death by Uguccone, but on that tyrant's expulsion he was acclaimed Signor of the city, and in 1325 inflicted such a crushing defeat on the Florentines at Altopascio, near Lucca, that Florence itself nearly fell into his hands. Then, as we have already seen, he was made Duke of Lucca and Pistoia by Ludwig the Bavarian, whom he accompanied to Rome. His career was suddenly ended by his death in 1328, just as Ludwig was on his inglorious retreat from Italy. Had he lived longer he might perhaps have united all Italy under his sway, for he was undoubtedly a military genius.<sup>1</sup> How his successes forced the Florentines to accept the Neapolitan prince, Charles, as their Signor is told in Chapter IV.

Of **Naples** during this period (1313-1330) we have already heard something in connexion with King Robert and with the 'Emperor' Ludwig, and in later chapters more details will be given. Here it will suffice to remind ourselves that Robert was the grandson of that Charles of Anjou who was invited by the Pope to crush the 'viper brood' of the Hohenstauffer, and did effectually exterminate the dynasty in South Italy and Sicily, with the kingship of which regions he was gratefully invested. Sicily had revolted from the Angevins, but they had consolidated their power as kings of Naples and were, of course, zealous supporters of the French Popes. Thus King Robert was at this epoch the great adversary of the Germanic 'Emperors' Henry of Luxemburg and Ludwig of Bavaria, and recognized leader of the Italian Guelfs, and therefore (though it seems strange) the natural protector of the Florentine Republic. Had he been as devoted to militarism as he was

<sup>1</sup> Machiavelli in his very imaginative *Life* of Castruccio extols him as 'not inferior to Philip of Macedon or Scipio of Rome.'



## HISTORICAL OUTLINE (1300-1400)

to learning he might have had more chance than the short-lived Castruccio to extend his rule over the whole of Italy—whether for her weal or woe, who can tell?

At **Rome** after the death of Henry VII King Robert's Vicar was reinstalled and the anti-Imperialist and papal Guelf party naturally came to the fore, led by the Orsini, the great rivals of the anti-papal Colonna family.<sup>1</sup> Many of the internal discords of the Eternal City, especially during the absence of the Papacy, had but little perceptible relation to the general drift of events. The only connexion worth noting during this period (1313-1330) is what we have already noted in the case of the visit of Ludwig.

**Milan** was until 1322 under the rule of the first Visconti Signore, Matteo I, whose servility towards Henry VII had gained him the title of Imperial Vicar in 1311. He established his authority over Pavia, Piacenza, Bergamo, and other cities. Milan, once the heroic champion of the Lombard League in its struggle against Barbarossa, thus became the main support of the Ghibellines and, as we shall see later, nearly succeeded in subjecting a great part of Italy to the Visconti despotism. Matteo was constantly at war with the Guelfs and their leaders, King Robert of Naples and the Avignon Popes, especially Pope John XXII, who was unwearied in inciting the faithful against him and endeavouring to asphyxiate him with papal and inquisitorial anathemas. After his death (in 1322, the year of the battle of Mühldorf) his son Galeazzo I was badly beaten by his papal and Guelf enemies and quarrelled with his Ghibelline friends, and when Ludwig came to Milan in 1327 he was accused of collusion with the Pope, and together with his son Azzo and his brothers Luchino and Giovanni cast into a horrible dungeon at Monza. But, as we know already, Ludwig during his inglorious retreat eagerly accepted bribes,

<sup>1</sup> Especially from the time of Boniface VIII the Colonnas were foes of the Papacy (see *Medieval Italy*, pp. 487 sq.), and yet were sometimes on the side of the Roman Republic, but were deadly foes of Cola di Rienzo and *his* republic. When we remember that it was the Roman Republic that had invited Henry to return to receive the Imperial crown we realize that Roman party strife was a very complicated tangle.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

so he probably sold his imperial permission for the liberation of the four Visconti and the recognition of Azzo as Signore of Milan.<sup>1</sup>

### 1330-1378

The chief events of national importance in the present period, stated as it were in parallel columns, are as follows :

Firstly a few words about the '**Empire.**' After his humiliating exit, Ludwig the Bavarian had very little connexion with Italy, though he lived till 1347. But another Germanic monarch undertook a rather curious raid. This was King John of Bohemia,<sup>2</sup> son of Henry VII. He seems to have been summoned both by the Guelf Brescia and by Mastino II, the successor of Can Grande at Verona. At first successful, he evidently aimed at procuring the Signory of numerous Italian cities as a stepping-stone to the kingship of North Italy and Tuscany; but the Visconti, the Estensi of Ferrara, the Gonzaga of Mantua, and the Florentine Republic leagued together and compelled him to recross the Alps (1333), and for more than twenty years Italy was free from the Germanic nuisance. Then, in 1354—the year in which Cola di Rienzo, the 'Last of the Tribunes,' was killed at Rome—the son of this King John of Bohemia, namely the 'Emperor' Charles IV, undertook a *Römerzug* and was actually crowned by a cardinal in St. Peter's, but his experiences were even more humiliating than those of Ludwig, and one may wonder how he found courage to revisit Rome some 13 years later in order to congratulate Pope Urban V on the not very successful 'return' of the Papacy from Babylonish captivity. In 1378 he died.

As for the **Popes** during this same period, there were six of them, all French. Clement VI we shall find an interesting if not attractive character in connexion with Cola di Rienzo and the ill-famed Joanna of Naples, and Innocent VI in connexion

<sup>1</sup> Galeazzo may have died in prison. Some say he was finally liberated and died at Lucca.

<sup>2</sup> Afterwards killed at Crécy (1346). His son, afterwards the 'Emperor' Charles IV, accompanied him, as a youth of 16, on this raid, and describes it in his still extant autobiography.

## HISTORICAL OUTLINE (1300-1400)

with the desolating war carried on by his emissary, Cardinal Alborno, in the endeavour to reconquer the Papal States (1353-1360). Then Pope Urban V, stimulated mainly by the wish to secure the fruits of this bloody crusade, decides to return to Rome, and carries out his intention, but after three years (1367-1370) he finds Roman captivity worse than Babylonish, and sneaks back to Avignon. His successor, Gregory XI, induced by similar motives, and also doubtless by the gentle influence of St. Catharine of Siena, repeats the experiment, which this time proves permanently successful (1377).

In the story of **Rome** from 1330 to 1378 we find, of course, the usual turmoil of civil strife—fierce conflicts between the nobles and the people, between the nobles themselves, between the republican, Imperialist, Neapolitan, papal, and other parties, in various combinations—much of which is related in the chapter on Rome. There were also some events of what we may perhaps call national importance. Among these we can scarcely reckon the above-mentioned coronation of the so-called Emperor, Charles IV, but we certainly may include the coronation of Petrarca, which took place in 1341, after he had been 'examined' at Naples by King Robert. Also, in spite of all its melodramatic accessories, the episode of Cola's Tribuneship is of deep interest—not for its results, but for what its results might have been. This episode, with its scenes at Rome, at the Bohemian court of Charles IV, and at Avignon, is described fully in the following chapter, so nothing need be said about it here. Lastly, the restoration of the Roman papal court by Gregory XI, and perhaps also the earlier attempt of Urban V, were events that affected the destiny of Italy as well as that of Rome.

As regards **Naples**, its story is told in Chapter II. Here we need only note that King Robert died in 1343, and that his granddaughter and successor, Joanna I, by her evil deeds brought about the ruin and invasion of the kingdom by Louis (Ludwig) of Hungary and Charles of Durazzo, by whom she was finally captured and put to death.

**Milan** during this period (1330-1378) was ruled by successive

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

Visconti, some of them the most crafty and ferocious monsters imaginable. Azzo, after his liberation from the Monza dungeon, was Signor for some ten years. Then his uncles and fellow-prisoners, Luchino and Archbishop Giovanni, shared the rule. After Luchino's death (1349) Giovanni showed very considerable vigour, holding Pope Clement VI at bay and making himself master of Bologna and Genoa (Petrarca, in 1353, invited by Giovanni, makes Milan his home for some years). Giovanni's three nephews after his death divide the Milanese territory between them. The eldest, Matteo, dies—perhaps poisoned by his brothers—in 1355, and the other two, Galeazzo II and Bernabò, share the realm and Milan itself and for twenty-three years continue to practise the most revolting atrocities. Then (1378) Galeazzo dies, and we shall hear later how his son got rid of his uncle Bernabò. We need not now discuss the numerous and often perplexing alliances and wars of these Visconti. It is enough to note here that there was from time to time great expansion and again great diminution of territory occasioned by military and diplomatic success and failure. An important Milanese undertaking was the long struggle against the papal temporal power, especially against Albornoz and his savage mercenaries, who for many a year devastated Romagna and other parts of the revolted Papal States.

**Florence** during this period was, as usual, much occupied with its internal troubles (an account of which will be found in Chapter IV), but we find it now and then taking part in wider movements. In 1331 it joined the League of Castelbaldo which was formed against John of Bohemia, as already related, and five years later, after the disastrous inundation of 1333, it made alliance with Venice against the Scaligeri of Verona. Then came a struggle with Pisa for the possession of Lucca, which ended in the ejection of the Florentine garrison from that city—an event that led to the ejection from office of the Florentine War-ministers (the so-called Twelve Saints of War) and the installation as Signor of Walter de Brienne, *soi-disant* Duke of Athens—to be followed in the next year (1343) by



## HISTORICAL OUTLINE (1300-1400)

his ejection. The year 1348 is notorious for the terrible ravages of the plague, the *Morte Nera*, in Florence and in other cities—a disaster that associates itself in one's mind with the *Decamerone* and the Pisan Campo Santo, and less directly with Thucydides, Procopius, and Defoe. Then we have, against a background of incessant civil broils and multifarious political changes, the not very heroic dealings of Florence with Cola di Rienzo—timid vacillation and something very like a *gran rifiuto* in regard to the possibility of a United Italy—but more vigour shown against the ambitious designs of the Visconti; then a colourless policy in regard to the 'descent' of Charles IV; then, some 20 years later, defiance of the 'foreign invader and tyrant,' namely the Avignon Pope, whose emissaries were devastating Italy, and championage of the great 'Libertas' movement; then the furious Interdict launched against the city by Gregory XI, and, after some brave resistance, inexplicable collapse and submission. Then (1378—soon after the return of the Papacy to Rome) Florence is agitated and lacerated by the Ciompi riot, but once more she 'renovates her members,' as Dante says, and until the end of the century prosecutes war vigorously, by means of mercenaries, against the regal ambitions of Gian Galeazzo, whose timely death (1402) saves her, perhaps, from being swallowed up by the Milanese monster.

As for **Venice** during the period 1330-78, facts of national import are its intervention in *terra ferma* politics, its wars concerning Ferrara and against Mastino II of Verona, and its sovereignty over Padua; but its long, ever again renewed, struggle with Genoa for maritime supremacy is perhaps what most influenced Italian history. In 1352 a desperate naval fight took place near Constantinople, followed very soon by an annihilating defeat of Genoa near Sardinia and the surrender of their city by the Genoese to Archbishop Giovanni of Milan, by whose aid they built a new navy and after harrying Venice itself captured almost all the Venetian fleet off the coast of the Morea (1354). Then came the internal troubles connected with the conspiracy of Marino Faliero; then a quarrel about

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

Crete and the renewal of war with Genoa and (in 1378) the capture of Chioggia, close to Venice, by the Genoese fleet—the sequel to which capture we shall learn later. Of more than local importance is the fact that about 1362 Petrarca was given a house by the Venetians, and spent in Venice, when not at Arquà in the Euganean hills, most of the remainder of his life.

### 1378–1400

Charles IV, Gregory XI, and Galeazzo II of Milan all died in 1378. The voracious Germanic-Roman Eagle had now become a futile scarecrow. ‘Emperor’ Wenzel (Wenceslaus), son of Charles IV, sold the title of reigning Duke to Gian Galeazzo Visconti, thus wholly abrogating Germanic overlordship in Italy—an overlordship never really recaptured, although the last coronation of a German ‘Roman Emperor’ in Rome did not take place till 1452.

**Rome** during these last 22 years of the century was the theatre of some very melodramatic events connected with the Papacy. Soon after re-establishing the papal court in the Vatican, Pope Gregory XI died. The tumultuous tragic-comical scenes that were enacted at the ensuing Conclave, and during the long struggle between Pope Urban VI and the schismatic ‘Clement VII,’ are described in the next chapter. The Great Schism, which now began, lasted till the Council of Constanz (1415–1418), when the triumph of the Roman Popes over their Schismatic rivals resulted in the total subjection of Rome to the Papacy—a state of things that lasted till our days.

At **Naples**, Charles of Durazzo, after putting Queen Joanna to death in 1383, established himself as king (he had been crowned as Neapolitan king by Urban VI three years before in Rome). The rival claimant, Louis of Anjou, invaded the Regno, but died of fever. Then comes the arrival of the fugitive Pope Urban and his quarrel with Charles, with its sensational sequel, which is related in Chapter II. On the death of Charles, assassinated (1386) during a visit to Hungary, his son, the youth Ladislaus, succeeds under regency; where-

## HISTORICAL OUTLINE (1300-1400)

upon the French Angevins<sup>1</sup> renew their claims. But Ladislaus, after his coronation in 1390, exhibits a warlike temper and chases the younger Louis d'Anjou out of Italy. This success emboldened him, as we shall see later, to assume, with the collusion of the Popes, the title of King of Rome, Ancona, Spoleto, and other domains, and to dream of extending his sway over Tuscany, and perhaps over all Italy.

At **Milan** this period is covered by the reign of Gian Galeazzo—a fiend in craft and cruelty—who from 1378 to 1385 reigned together with his uncle Bernabò, and then deposed and murdered him. After various successful wars, carried on by his mercenaries and *condottieri*, during which he put an end to the dynasty of the Veronese Scaligeri, he bought (1395) the ducal title from 'Emperor' Wenceslaus. Then he renewed his conquests, making himself master of Pisa, Siena, Perugia, Assisi, and other cities, and had he not suddenly died in 1402 (probably of the plague), he would perhaps have mastered also Florence.

The events of general importance connected with **Florence** during this period have been sufficiently indicated in the last section.

As for **Venice**, the one great event, momentous both for Venice and for Italy, was the 'War of Chioggia' (1378-80). In this the Genoese, after inflicting a serious defeat on the Venetian fleet near Pola, took possession of Grado and Chioggia; but the Venetian admiral, Pisani, who had been imprisoned on account of his insuccess at Pola, was liberated and, having obtained a new fleet, blockaded the Genoese in Chioggia. The surrender of the Genoese fleet was the beginning of that Venetian maritime hegemony which attained its zenith in the Quattrocento, as will be related in the chapters on Venice.

### NOTE ON THE COMPAGNIE DI VENTURA

The *Bande*, or 'Companies of Fortune,' which for many years wrought such havoc in Italy are an interesting phenomenon in the same way as a plague of devastating vermin is interesting to the natural historian.

---

<sup>1</sup> From Table II (a) it will be seen that Charles himself had some Angevin blood in his veins.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

The Norman adventurers in South Italy are early examples of such soldiers of fortune, for although the first-comers—pilgrim knights returning from the Holy Land—refused to serve as mercenaries, since they 'fought for religion, and not for pay,' later bands accepted service freely, both with Lombard dukes and with Byzantines, until under the sons of Tancred they formed themselves into a powerful state. Then in the pauses of the long conflict between the Angevins and the Spaniards for the possession of Sicily, after the Vespers of Palermo (1282), many disoccupied fighters, especially Aragonese and Catalonians, were enrolled as mercenaries for service in Italy or in the East. Even the republics began to depend on 'soldiers' instead of burghers.<sup>1</sup> Then we hear of German troops being left behind, like plague-spots, by 'Emperors' whose Italian expeditions proved failures, such as Henry of Luxemburg, Ludwig the Bavarian, and Charles IV. When Henry was buried at Pisa (1313) about 1000 of his German troops, vainly entreated by Frederic of Sicily to recommence the campaign against Naples, took service with Uguccone and later (1329) joined a *banda* of their fellow-countrymen who had deserted from Ludwig's army when that new-crowned 'Holy Roman Emperor' was on his inglorious retreat from Italy. These deserters settled themselves in a military camp in the hills near Montecatini and lived on plunder. They then took pay under Marco Visconti (the warlike, short-lived son of Matteo) and became the first of those roving companies which, as Gregorovius says, were like small nomad military states, each with its *condottiere*—a kind of brigand chieftain—and its officials, and code of rules, and its large camp-following of menials and women. We hear next of a *Banda della Colomba* which harried Tuscany about 1335, and a *Banda di S. Giorgio* in the service of that Lodrisio Visconti who was defeated by his cousin Luchino of Milan (see Chapter III); then we have the famous *Gran Compagnia*, led by Werner von Urslingen,<sup>2</sup> who vaunted himself as 'the enemy of God and of Pity,' and later by Count Landau, who pillaged Romagna and was bribed and hired by Cardinal Albornoz; then there was the *banda* of the notorious Fra Moriale (or Monreale), a prior of the Knights of St. John, who turned *condottiere* and was finally executed by Cola di Rienzo (1354).

The Peace of Brétigny (1360) between England and France let loose in many countries hordes of discharged soldiery.<sup>3</sup> In Italy, in addition to the German and Spanish roving companies, we now find Breton and Gascon mercenaries

---

<sup>1</sup> The battle of Campaldino (1289) was perhaps the last fought solely by burghers.

<sup>2</sup> It was just about now that Petrarca wrote his fine Canzone *Italia mia*, in which he laments the presence of 'foreign swords' which pollute the green fields of Italy with barbaric blood (see Chapter VI).

<sup>3</sup> About 1365 Urban V tried to eliminate the pest by inciting the chief *condottieri* to undertake a Crusade to the East; but they laughed him to scorn.



## HISTORICAL OUTLINE (1300-1400)

(much used by the papal emissary Albornož and later by the bloodthirsty Cardinal Robert of Geneva), and also the ill-famed English 'White Company,' led by Sir John Hawkwood,<sup>1</sup> who, after being in the pay of the Pisans and Bernabò Visconti, and then of Pope Gregory XI and Cardinal Robert (when he took part in the terrible massacre of the people of Cesena, as related in the chapter on Rome), passed into the service of the Florentines. He was defeated and nearly captured (c. 1390) by Jacopo dal Verme, the *condottiere* of Gian Galeazzo. He died in 1394, and was buried with great pomp in the Florentine Duomo, where a large fresco by Paolo Uccello represents him on horseback (see Fig. 5 and List of Illustrations). By this time Italian *condottieri* had begun to compete with foreign soldiers of fortune, and several of these had the luck to become Signori of cities. Francesco Sforza even rose to be Duke of Milan (1450) and Federico di Montefeltro to be Duke of Urbino (1474). The dramatic story of the great *condottiere* Carmagnola, the Venetian captain-general who was executed 'between the columns,' is told in a later chapter. Two other Venetian *condottieri* famous in the Quattrocento, and perhaps still more famous nowadays, on account of the splendid equestrian statues of them, designed by Donatello and Verrocchio (or Leonardo) and known to most who have visited Padua and Venice, were Gattamelata and Colleoni. Besides such generals, hired by republics and despots, we hear even in the Cinquecento of roving companies, such as the celebrated *Bande Nere*, captained by Giovanni, the father of the Medicean duke Cosimo I.

---

<sup>1</sup> Born at Sible Hedingham, Essex, whither his remains were brought from Florence by the request of our Richard II. His tomb and coat of arms (a hawk in a bush) are still to be seen there.

## CHAPTER I

### ROME AND THE PAPACY (1300-1400)

(See List 2)

TO depict the maze of Italian history from a number of different standpoints is a method that involves some repetition, and when space is limited this compels one to renounce to a great extent the advantages of the monograph, the charm of which consists largely in expansiveness and interesting detail. So here I can but offer a slight sketch of Rome and the Papacy in the Trecento, occasionally attempting to insert a little detail and colour.

Although during two-thirds of this 14th century—that is, during the so-called ‘Babylonish Captivity’—the story of Rome is not closely interwoven with that of the Papacy, it seems advisable to treat them together, and as a full narrative is not possible I shall have to select a few striking events and episodes, beginning from about 1313, at which date my volume on *Medieval Italy* ended. In that volume it has been related how Henry VII, of Luxemburg, the last German monarch who made any really serious attempt to substantiate his claim as an ‘Augustus,’ crossed the Alps in the character of a *rex pacificus*, enthusiastically greeted by banished Dante as the Deliverer of Italy, and how he visited Rome and was crowned there, in the newly rebuilt Lateran basilica—not by Clement V, who some four years before had transferred the papal seat to Avignon, but by his legate. Henry’s inglorious retreat, the courageous defiance with which Florence treated him, his attempted return to Rome, and his death, are some of the events that close the last period of that Middle Age the boundary of which may be said to be marked by Dante’s great poem.

## R O M E (1300-1400)

On the death of Henry VII the Pope, that 'crafty Gascon' whom Dante<sup>1</sup> dooms to the same pit in Malebolge as Boniface himself, emboldened by the favour of the French king, asserts that, according to oaths taken as King of the Romans, the Emperor was his vassal, and he acts as if the Imperial office had for the time reverted to him. He institutes Robert, the King of Naples, Imperial Vicar of Italy, thus endeavouring to revive the ridiculous claims of Hildebrand and Innocent III. In 1314 he dies, detested by Italians for having removed the seat of the Papacy from Rome and having made it the minion of Philip the Fair; nor was he less detestable for other reasons, as is proved by his brutal treatment of the Knights-Templars.<sup>2</sup> Now when Clement V died a fierce conflict arose between the French and the Italian cardinals. The French, being seventeen against six, and being supported by King Philip and the Neapolitan king, Robert, as well as by a strong party at Rome headed by the Colonna, finally won, after the battle had lasted two years and the Conclave, held at Carpentras, had been dispersed in headlong flight by an armed attack of Gascons. Then the cardinals met at Lyon (1316) and elected Jacques Duèse, the Bishop of Avignon, a small, ugly, clever Gascon of Cahors, *protégé* of King Robert and tool of King Philip. John XXII, as the new Pope called himself, soon showed that he meant to outdo Clement himself in arrogance, avarice, and cruelty.<sup>3</sup> He also distinguished himself as a heretic by propounding a doctrine in regard to the state of souls in bliss for which he was condemned by the Synod of Vincennes and nearly summoned before an Oecumenical Council.

The most important event in the story of Rome during the

<sup>1</sup> *Inf.* xix, 83; *Par.* xxx, 143. See also *Purg.* xxxii, 150, where Clement's papal court at Avignon is called a 'shameless harlot.'

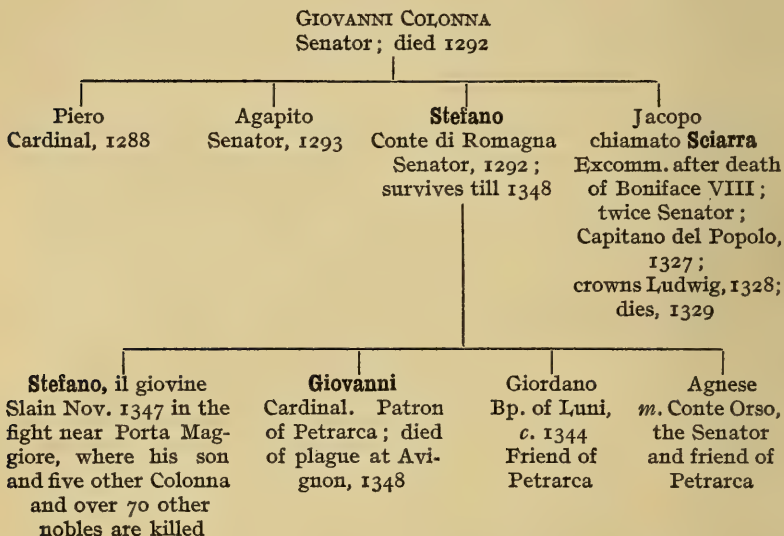
<sup>2</sup> The Order, founded in 1119 and constituted mainly by St. Bernard, had acquired great wealth. This was coveted by Philip the Fair, and on charges of heresy and vice Clement, abetted by the Hospitallers, had the Grand Master and about 140 of the Templars tortured (some were even burnt) and the Order abolished.

<sup>3</sup> 'The men of Cahors and Gascony are thirsting to drink our blood,' wrote Dante about 1318 (*Par.* xxvii, 58), and in a Latin letter railed against the *Vasconum opprobrium*.

# ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

pontificate of John XXII was the visit of Ludwig (Louis) the Bavarian, who, as successor of Henry VII, after defeating at Mühldorf his rival, Frederick of Austria,<sup>1</sup> determined to have

## THE COLONNA



himself crowned as Emperor at Rome. Now Pope John had confirmed the Neapolitan king as Imperial Vicar of Italy, contemptuously ignoring the claims of both the Germanic rivals for the Imperial office, and when he heard that Ludwig was preparing to cross the Alps he excommunicated him (1324). At Rome itself a democratic revolution now took place. King Robert's officials and his aristocratic adherents were expelled, among them Stephen, the head of the Colonna family, who,

<sup>1</sup> Son of Albert of Habsburg. See *Medieval Italy*, Index. The son of Henry VII, John, King of Bohemia (killed at Crécy in 1346), had been passed over. His son, the 'Emperor' Charles IV, we shall meet with later. It would be inconvenient to use inverted commas always when mentioning these so-called Holy Roman Emperors, so we will allow them the title without further protest, remembering that even the Ottoman conqueror of Constantinople adopted the title—namely, Kaisar-i-Roum.



## ROME (1300-1400)

as the reader of *Medieval Italy* may remember, had been banished by his great foe, Pope Boniface VIII, but had returned to Rome from the French court. Unlike Stephen the younger Colonna, Sciarra, famous for his arrest of Boniface at Anagni (see *Medieval Italy*, p. 487), was a republican, and he was now chosen as *Capitano del Popolo*, with a Council of Fifty-two. The once again revived Roman Republic, though it scorned to recognize the King of Naples or his Vicar as its Signor, was ready to accept the Pope, or his Vicegerent, as its Senator, on the condition that the Pope would return. But Pope John, after refusing to receive any more envoys sent to Avignon, wrote a diplomatically courteous but decisively negative letter to the Romans inveighing against Ludwig and insisting on fealty to Robert.

At this crisis the Genoese, in collusion with King Robert, send a fleet to attack Ostia. The Romans haste to the rescue, but they are defeated, and Ostia is sacked. Exasperated and alarmed by this hostile act, Rome armed, and when shortly afterwards the partisans of Robert, headed by Stephen Colonna and other exiles, broke into the city and erected barricades, the great bell of the Capitol summoned the newly enrolled republican *milizia*, and they were driven out with such slaughter that Sciarra celebrated the event by a triumphal ascent to the Capitol, like some ancient Roman victor.<sup>1</sup> Meantime Ludwig, welcomed in North Italy by the Visconti, by Can Grande of Verona, the Estensi of Ferrara, Castruccio of Lucca, and envoys of Frederic of Sicily, had assumed the Iron Crown at Milan and had treacherously seized his host, Galeazzo Visconti, and had thrown him and his son and brothers into the fiendishly contrived dungeons at Monza which they themselves had constructed. Then, having left an Imperial Vicar at Milan and having besieged and taken Pisa (Florence, defended by its *Podestà*, King Robert's son, was too strong to attack), he marched southwards, taking with him Castruccio—that

<sup>1</sup> A rude relief of Michael and the Dragon, with inscription and date (1327), commemorative of this victory, still exists, if not lately removed, on the Porta S. Sebastiano (Via Appia).

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

‘scourge of Tuscany,’ as Villari calls him—whom he had made the ‘Duke’ of Lucca.

At Rome counsels were divided. Among the Fifty-two were many who doubted the intentions of Ludwig and made the Council send envoys to him asking for various guarantees. But Sciarra and some of the Savelli were already in collusion with the German, and when the envoys arrived their voices were drowned by a blast of trumpets—and Castruccio led his vanguard Romewards. Ludwig followed and, frenetically welcomed by ‘crowds of heretics and reformers’—none of the papal clerics showing their faces—was escorted to St. Peter’s, where a high schismatic festival was celebrated; and he then installed himself in the papal apartments of the Vatican! The city had been placed under Interdict by the papal legate. Most of the priests and monks had left the city. The churches were closed and the relics hidden away. But the German potentate laughed all that to scorn. He was accustomed to refractory clerics in his own dominions, and here he had on his side a considerable party of Franciscan Minorites and many others who, without being Imperialistic, detested the scandals of the Avignon Papacy and the insolence of the Neapolitan overlordship. Wishing a more central residence he removed to the palace connected with S. Maria Maggiore. Then he summoned a Parliament in the great hall of the Capitol and presented himself and his wife as candidates for the Imperial dignity. On the proposal of the schismatic Bishop of Corsica he was created Signor and Senator of Rome, and the Imperial crown was assigned to him by a unanimous vote, amid an enthusiasm which was, we may suppose, due to the pride felt by the Romans in exercising their right of conferring the *imperium*—a right which for centuries they had claimed in vain. Moreover, Rome naturally exulted at having defied the anathemas of the Avignon Pope.

A graphic description of the coronation is given by a contemporary chronicler, the Florentine Giovanni Villani. He pictures vividly the grand procession to St. Peter’s from S. Maria Maggiore through the decorated streets, the prancing

## ROME (1300-1400)

steeds with their silken trappings, the magistrates with their robes of cloth of gold, and so on.<sup>1</sup> But he does not conceal his sarcastic contempt when he tells us that as the Count of the Lateran, an official necessary for the coronation, had taken flight from Rome, Ludwig forthwith dubbed Castruccio with the title, and 'instead of the Pope selected some schismatic bishops to consecrate with chrism both him and his lady.' The crown was then put on his head by Sciarra Colonna in the name of the Roman people—in the presence, doubtless, of many who recalled to mind how, twenty-five years before, Sciarra had with armed violence made prisoner Pope Boniface at Anagni, dragging him from his throne (so it was sometimes asserted) and attempting to stab him. Four months later Ludwig held in the piazza of St. Peter's a great assembly which solemnly deposed Pope John of Avignon and elected a Minorite Frate in his place with the title Nicholas the Fifth.<sup>2</sup> This was followed by a public burning in effigy of Pope John and King Robert.

During these months the new Emperor had lived in great state in the Lateran Palace. Castruccio, the efficient *condottiere* of his troops, had returned to Lucca,<sup>3</sup> and, as ever, the insolence and robberies of the German soldiery incited disturbances. Barricades were erected and several serious fights took place near the Isola Tiberina, so that Ludwig had to garrison strongly S. Angelo and the Borgo. Then, suddenly, King Robert of Naples invades. His troops reach the basilica of S. Paolo fuori le mura,<sup>4</sup> after having chased the German troops out of Ostia. To impress the Romans with theatrical

<sup>1</sup> *Cronica*, x, 54. The Teutonic and Protestant Gregorovius is naturally charmed at the thought of a German king receiving the *imperium* from the S.P.Q.R. in defiance of the Papacy; but contemporary writers took a different view. Thus Villani speaks of *la presunzione del dannato bavaro*, and the *ipocrita dissimulazione* of the coronation ceremony.

<sup>2</sup> Neither he nor the later Schismatics, 'Clement VII' and 'Benedict XIII,' count in the list of Popes.

<sup>3</sup> Pistoia, of which this 'Duke' of Lucca had made himself master, had been captured by the Florentines. Castruccio retook it, and also captured Pisa. At Rome he was also made 'Senator' by Ludwig.

<sup>4</sup> See *Medieval Italy*, pp. 58, 83, 264.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

display (a policy native to the Teutonic mind) Ludwig holds a ridiculous second coronation scene in St. Peter's, this time placing the tiara on his Antipope's head and receiving from him papal unction and the Imperial crown. Then, armed with the thunderbolts of his puppet, he sets forth to crush the invaders; but the fleet promised by Frederic of Sicily fails to appear, and he returns crestfallen to Rome, where ridicule and riot await him. Finally he decides to depart, taking with him his Antipope. The departure was of the nature of a flight. A great mob of mobile Quirites assailed the despised *stranieri* with cries of *Morte agli eretici!* and with showers of stones which killed some of the Imperial retinue.

As soon as they are gone a great change comes over the scene. The Guelf party—adherents of Pope John and King Robert—return; an Orsini and old Stephen Colonna are elected Senators; Sciarra Colonna and the Savelli take to flight; the palaces of the Imperialists are sacked; corpses of German soldiers are exhumed, dragged through the streets, and thrown into the Tiber; a Parliament of the people annuls all Ludwig's acts and his edicts are burnt by the hangman. Then Neapolitan troops enter the city, and the authority of the Avignon Pope and of King Robert is re-established (August 1328).

As Ludwig the Bavarian has been connected in our minds with Rome we will follow his fortunes for a time. Taking with him his Antipope and schismatic cardinals he makes his way northward, devastating and plundering. At Corneto he has a meeting with Prince Peter of Sicily (see Genealogical Table III), who with his fleet had arrived at the mouth of the Tiber, but had found Ludwig departed. After mutual recriminations, Peter vainly demanding that the Emperor should return to Rome and attack Naples, they decide to meet again at Pisa; and thither Ludwig hastens, expecting to find there his trusty *condottiere* Castruccio, who, as we have seen, had been obliged to leave his Imperial master in the lurch at Rome. But just at this moment Castruccio dies. Basely ignoring his services, Ludwig dispossesses his son of



## ROME (1300-1400)

the ducal Signory of Lucca and sells it to a foe of the family. He then makes himself Signor of Pisa. He also for a large bribe releases Azzo Visconti from the foul dungeon at Monza and makes him Imperial Vicar of Milan. For a bribe he also gives Lodovico Gonzaga the Vicariate of Mantua. Then, at the end of 1329, he crossed the Alps; and thus ended this ridiculous 'descent' of a German king in quest of the Imperial crown.

Antipope Nicholas, while with his master at Pisa, occupied himself with launching bulls at his papal rival of Avignon. But shortly afterwards Pisa, like many other cities, rose against the foreign domination and declared for republican liberty and for Pope John. Hereupon Nicholas fled, but was captured and sent to Avignon with a halter round his neck. Strangely enough his life was spared and he survived as a prisoner till 1333.

Republicanism and its strange ally, the Papacy—which was also the ally of King Robert—were now almost supreme. Most of the important Ghibelline leaders were dead, such as Galeazzo Visconti, Can Grande, Castruccio, and Sciarra Colonna, and the farcical episode of Ludwig the Bavarian had exercised a great influence in reviving the longing of Italians to expel for ever from their soil *il barbaro nemico*, as the Florentines had called Henry of Luxemburg,<sup>1</sup> and as during earlier centuries, and later, many other patriots have expressed themselves in regard to the German peril.

During the next three years (1330-1333) took place the adventurous raid of King John of Bohemia, which has been described in the Historical Outline (p. 12) and which has no close connexion with the story of Rome.

In 1334 died Pope John XXII—'the Midas of Avignon,' as he has been called, a name that one feels he well deserves when one hears of the enormous piles of gold found in his money chests.

When Ludwig with his Germans and his Italian Ghibelline vassals had disappeared, and the anti-German fugitives, old

<sup>1</sup> *Medieval Italy*, p. 491.

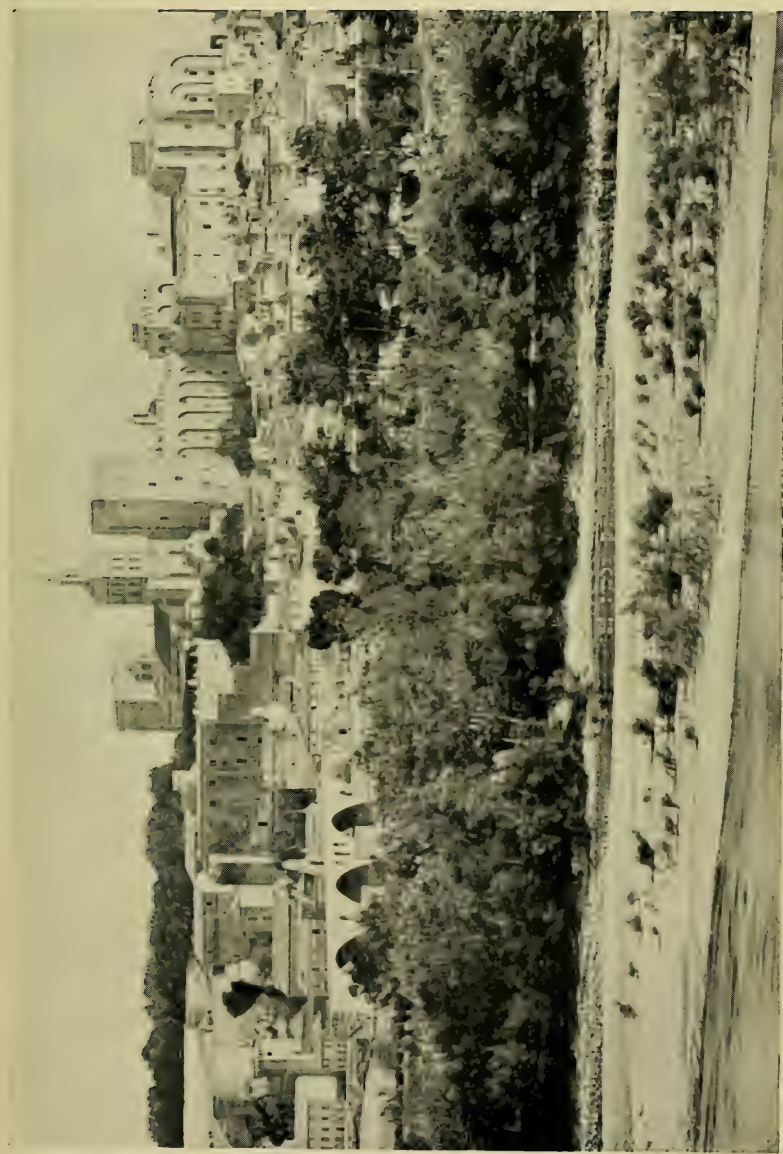
## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

Stephen Colonna and the Orsini among them, had returned, the Republic again acknowledged the overlordship of Pope John of Avignon, accepting as the supreme magistrates the two Senators whose election required the papal sanction, or the sanction of Robert of Naples, as papal plenipotentiary. As we have seen, the first of these Senators were Stephen Colonna and an Orsini; and again and again during the next period we find this supreme dignity divided between the rival houses of the nobility—a policy of equipoise vigorously practised by the new Pope, Benedict XII (1334–1341). This son of a Languedoc miller was an honest, moral, earnest-minded, and rather sleepy old man, whose one great rôle was that of a peace-maker.<sup>1</sup> But in spite of all his endeavours the conflicts between the people and the nobles and the feuds between the rival houses of the aristocracy became more and more infuriated. The most ferocious battlings went on by day and by night amidst the vast ruins of the ancient city. Barricades and trenches and fortifications divided the hostile encampments. The Tiber bridges were held and assailed by the rival factions. The old Milvian Bridge was destroyed<sup>2</sup> by the Orsini.

Amidst all this murderous hurly-burly took place (1333–1334) a very dramatic *intermezzo*—one in which was reflected a totally different side of human nature. The misery that had been brought on Italy by constant war and devastation reproduced at this period several phenomena like that of the Flagellants (*Medieval Italy*, p. 509). Of these the most interesting case was that of the so-called ‘Doves’ (*Colombe*), or ‘Brethren of the Dove’—penitents who, following a standard of a dove and bearing olive branches in their hands, were led from city to city by Venturino, a Dominican friar of Bergamo. A multitude of ten thousand of these ‘Doves’ is said to have entered Rome (the population of which at that

<sup>1</sup> He is said to have longed to return to Rome; but, finding the French king opposed, he began the enormous Palais des Papes, which overhangs the Rhone at Avignon like a huge thundercloud, and which seemed meant for the residence of the Papacy to all eternity.

<sup>2</sup> All but the four middle arches, which are antique.



2. AVIGNON



3. PALAZZO VECCHIO, FLORENCE



## ROME (1300-1400)

time seems to have been not much more than double this number), and Venturino held a great meeting on the Capitol, to which, like the Athenians to the 'Hill of Mars,' the Romans flocked, attracted by novelty. But the only result that his eloquence produced was that they ridiculed his bad Latin<sup>1</sup> and burst into laughter when he protested against the vice and frivolity of Rome (such as the licentious carnival excesses for which at that time the Piazza Navona was notorious) and declared the Romans unworthy of that city which had been sanctified by the bodies of the Saints. So, shaking off the dust of Rome, the 'Doves' departed; and Venturino, hoping for sympathy, made his way to Avignon. However, the Pope (it was Pope John, who shortly after died) accused him of doctrines subversive not merely of Christianity, but—what was far worse—of the authority of the Avignon Papacy, and he was banished for life to some far-distant land. Thus the Dove and Olive-branch movement came to an end, as Ark expeditions have ended in our day, and as such attempts seem ever doomed to end.

Benedict XII was perhaps not quite so inconsolable as he professed to be for being compelled to remain at Avignon. He managed to keep a fairly firm grip on his temporal authority in Italy by nominating or confirming as Papal Vicars in the greater cities some of the most powerful of the Italian despots, such as the Visconti of Milan, the Scaligeri of Verona, the Estensi of Ferrara, and the Gonzaga of Mantua. Even turbulent Rome submitted, though intermittently, to his Senators. It was therefore scarcely surprising that a native of Languedoc who was inclined to be a *bon vivant* should find that Italy, distracted by wars and feuds, possessed but few attractions to countervail those of his vast palace on the majestic Rhone, and of the fair campaigns and (a point much emphasized by Petrarca) the luscious wines of Southern France. He also

<sup>1</sup> *Ponevano cura se peccava in falso latino*, says an old chronicle cited by Muratori. Latin was still used much on public occasions and for official purposes, and seems to have been commonly understood. But considering its degeneracy one may well wonder how many of Venturino's auditors were competent critics.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

had the comfortable satisfaction of humiliating the German king, who had dared to elect an Antipope and to dub himself Emperor on the strength of his coronation by a Roman noble. For diplomatic reasons Ludwig had felt it best to ingratiate himself with Benedict, and he even went so far as to offer to resign his title and be recrowned by the Pope himself or his legate, promising to stay but a single day in Rome for this purpose. This was, of course, a great triumph for the Pope, but he was at that moment unfortunately in difficulties, having unwisely taken the part of our King Edward III against Philip of France. So negotiations dropped through, and finally Ludwig, thinking better of his submissive proposals, promulgated (1338) at Mainz and Frankfurt the famous 'Constitutions'—afterwards confirmed by the Golden Bull of Charles IV—which asserted that 'Kings of the Romans' and 'Roman Emperors' could be legally elected and instituted by the decision of the German Electors (*Kurfürsten*) without any interference of Pope or of the Roman people. On the pedestal formed by these and other arbitrary 'Constitutions' stood the Germanic 'Holy Roman Emperor' of later days—an unsubstantial shadowy shape, but anyhow a shadowy shape of some dignity and not a ridiculous thing of straw and fine rags such as the Prussian 'Caesar' of our days.

To describe fully the kaleidoscopic political changes that took place in Rome during Benedict's pontificate would be Danaid labour. The so-called Republic, torn by internal strife between rival nobles and between the people and the nobility, ever again submits to papal Senators. In 1339, the Senators having once more been expelled, an interesting experiment is made: 'experts' are requested from the city of Florence in order to teach old Grandmother Rome how to start a republic! Priors, *Arti*, and a *Gonfaloniere*, all after the Florentine model, are set going. Then, when Pope Benedict anathematizes and insists on the recognition of his Senators, his Senators are forthwith ejected, and *Capitani del Popolo* are elected. But Benedict finally wins. He dispatches a nuntius armed with thunderbolts, and in place of the *Capitani* the

## ROME (1300-1400)

two papal Senators are again installed. One of these Senators, Count Orso di Anguillara, is well worth mentioning, for he was son-in-law of old Stephen Colonna and a great friend of Petrarca; and it was by him that the poet was crowned on the Capitol in 1341.

Petrarca's coronation on the Roman Capitol forms an important episode in his life, which is described elsewhere, but it should here be mentioned that he had spent some time at Capranica<sup>1</sup> and in Rome during 1336 and 1337, and that on his return to Avignon, still full of classic enthusiasms, he began his great Latin poem, *Africa*, on which he mainly based his hopes of immortality. Early in 1341, having accepted the offer of the laurel crown, he journeyed first to Naples, in order to be examined in the presence of King Robert, for whose learning he had unbounded reverence. Just before Easter he arrived at Rome, where he was entertained by his friend, Senator Orso, and amidst the acclamations of the whole city received the laurel crown as the recognized successor of the great poets of ancient Rome. Or should we rather say that Rome was already conscious, though somewhat dimly perhaps, that this coronation—more important than many a coronation of Pope or Emperor—symbolized the future supremacy of Italy in art and learning? If she felt a foreboding of this, it was a sane inspiration and no such feverish hallucination as that which, a few years later, made her attempt to grasp and hold the phantom of that Roman World-Empire which had ceased for ever to exist.

A year after Petrarca's coronation another Frenchman, Pierre de Beaufort, succeeds to the papal throne as Clement VI. He was, it is said, severely monkish, but at the same time much more of a *gran signore* than the miller's son—the convivial old Benedict. The Romans, as usual, send envoys to offer the new pontiff the Senatorial dignity<sup>2</sup> in the hope

<sup>1</sup> Between Rome and Viterbo. Here Senator Orso had a palace. Petrarca wrote graphic letters describing the terrible state of Rome and the vicinity. To reach Rome he had to be escorted by 200 Colonna horsemen.

<sup>2</sup> According to custom, the Senatorial office is offered to and accepted by the nobleman 'Pierre de Beaufort,' not to and by 'Pope Clement VI.'

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

of inducing him to return from 'Babylon.' Clement accepts graciously all that is offered, but, unmoved even by Petrarca's eloquence and verse, refuses to budge. He nominates the younger Stephen Colonna and an Orsini to represent him as Senator.

Early in 1343 dies King Robert of Naples, after a reign of more than 33 years. His only son, Charles of Calabria, had died in 1328, and the daughter of Charles, the afterwards notorious Joanna, who now at the age of 26 ascended the Neapolitan throne, inspired not only in the southern kingdom but also at Rome many serious forebodings. At Rome great disturbances occurred. The republicans once more gained the upper hand. The Senators were again abolished, and the democratic magistracy of the 'Thirteen Men' (*XIII boni viri*) was re-established,<sup>1</sup> nominally under the supremacy of the Pope; and to secure his acquiescence in these changes, as well as once more to urge his return to Rome, a second embassy was sent to Avignon. Of this mission the leader and 'orator' was a young Roman notary who had distinguished himself by his eloquence and his vigour in the last democratic movement. The name of this *oratore al Papa* was Cola di Rienzo.<sup>2</sup>

### COLA DI RIENZO<sup>3</sup>

Nicola, or Cola, son of Lorenzo, was born, probably, in 1313—the year in which Henry of Luxemburg died and

<sup>1</sup> These *Tredecimviri* were captains of the thirteen parishes (*rioni*) of Rome. We hear of them again from time to time. They were abolished in 1358 (four years after Cola's death) and *Septemviri* were instituted.

<sup>2</sup> I.e. Nicholas, son of Lawrence (Lorenzo, Renzo, or Rienzo). He gives his Latin name as *Nicolaus Laurentii*. From this genitive singular, *Laurentii*, the incorrect form *Rienzi* is derived. He did not belong to a family *dei Rienzi*. Another Italian form of Nicholas is Niccolò.

<sup>3</sup> Much that is known of Cola di Rienzo is derived originally from a very interesting *Life* written in quaint old Italian by an unknown contemporary—a rather prosy, credulous, and uncritical personage, who gives us a good many long digressions. Thus he treats us to a whole chapter of his own lucubrations and those of Aristotle on the subject of dreams in order to support his assertion that Cola foresaw the future in visions of the night. This *Vita* is edited with many notes and appendices by Zepherino Re. Numerous facts are also given in Cola's letters to Charles IV. Thus he tells us that his home was on the bank of the Tiber and was a *taberna publica*.



## ROME (1300-1400)

Boccaccio saw the light. His mother was a washerwoman, and his father kept a tavern on the bank of the Tiber, in the quarter of Rome then called 'Reola' (*Arenula*—the 'Sandy'?) and still known as 'Regola'—nearly opposite the Isola Tiberina and not far from the falsely named 'House of Rienzi.' His mother died early, and the youth was with relatives at Anagni—a peasant among peasants,' as he lamented—till 20 years of age. But at Anagni, and still more when he had returned to Rome, he must have had unusual opportunities for study, and must have used them with unusual vigour, for the young notary soon became noted for his erudition as an enthusiastic student of classical Roman history, literature, and antiquities. Nor was he a mere student. His brother had been killed by the nobles, and he naturally took a deep interest in the democratic movements of the day and was doubtless one of the most ardent of those who welcomed Petrarca to Rome as the great poet of Italian patriotism. As we learn from the letters that he wrote later to Charles IV, he spent much of this period of his life in reading such authors as Livy and Cicero and Valerius Maximus, in poring over old inscriptions and sculptures and dreaming of the revival of the great Roman Republic—dreaming, too, that some day 'he himself would try to realize what he had learnt by reading.'

His scholarship gained the young man, as we have seen, the honour of being selected as the spokesman of the embassy sent to Pope Clement VI; and his eloquence gained him the favour of the Pontiff, who invested him with the office of Notary to the papal Privy Council (*Camera*) at Rome. He stayed some months at Avignon, and here made the personal acquaintance of Petrarca, with whom, we are told, he held much converse on the subject so dear to both their hearts; and doubtless many of their aspirations and predictions, however visionary they might have appeared to a sober-minded contemporary, would have a great interest for us nowadays, contemplating them in the light of the new-risen day of United Italy. Among the cardinals at Avignon was Giovanni Colonna, a son of old Stefano and the Maecenas of Petrarca. He, it

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

is said, was so incensed at Cola's tirades against the Roman nobles that he persuaded Pope Clement to forbid his presence at court. But a truce seems to have been patched up by Petrarca, who had a wonderful gift of making intimate friendships with people who were deadly enemies. Anyhow, Cola seems to have lost none of his self-assurance on account of this *contretemps*, for he wrote most magniloquent letters in true pontifical style to the authorities at Rome.

After his return (April 1344) he soon became the head of a secret society of revolutionaries, a successful device employed by whom was that of appealing to the mob by means of large paintings, not unlike our 'posters.' One of these pictures is described by the author of the *Vita*. It was painted on a wall of the Capitol facing the Forum. It represented a ship in a storm—the ship of the State, as described in one of the *Odes* of Horace—and there were four other ships, symbolizing Babylon, Troy, Carthage, and Jerusalem, lying wrecked on the rocks. Another, and a more dignified, advertisement—though probably it appealed less to the mob—was the ancient, black, bronze tablet which, as those who have visited the Capitoline Museum may remember, is now to be seen on the wall of the Sala of the famous red 'Faun.' This tablet, turned face inwards, had been used to form the side of an altar in the Lateran church, and when the basilica was rebuilt after the fire of 1308 it doubtless lay unused. Cola seems to have discovered and deciphered it, and thus to have found that the inscription was very much to his purpose; for it is a transcript of the *Lex Regia* by which the Senate and Roman People conferred the *imperium* on Vespasian (A.D. 69). So he has the tablet inserted in a wall of the Lateran church (*in medio latere ecclesiae*, according to his own account), and great 'posters' are painted showing Vespasian being invested with imperial powers by the people and their delegates. Then he announces a public meeting, and draped in a white *toga* he harangues a vast assembly with fervid eloquence on the past glories of Rome and her glorious destiny in the future—the only visible result of which performance is that he finds himself

## ROME (1300-1400)

patronized by some of the 'intellectuals' among the nobility as an interesting and innocuous young enthusiast. Little do they suspect the coming earthquake. And yet there were many premonitory signs. There was a sense of insecurity in all Italy, as if the centre of gravity was shifting and equipoise was in danger. At Naples things were in a state of anarchy after the murder of Andreas of Hungary—a murder to which his youthful consort, Queen Joanna, was probably privy—and this seriously affected Rome and other cities; for Naples had been during many years a strong pillar of the Gueff cause, which, as being anti-Imperialist, was also the cause of the republicans and of the papal party. In Lombardy the vigorous diplomacy of Archbishop Giovanni of Milan was rapidly extending the personal despotism of the Visconti—destined ere long to overwhelm even Bologna and Genoa. In Tuscany, on the other hand, the Republic of Florence had freed itself from Neapolitan Vicars and from the short despotism of the 'Duke of Athens,' and had once more reasserted its democratic *Ordinamenti*, which excluded all nobles from the Government and gave the political power over to the *Arti*; and these revolutionary movements had spread to other Tuscan cities, while the general disturbance was increased by the ever greater effrontery of mercenaries and freebooters (connected with the *Compagnie* or *Bande di ventura*). In Rome, too, the Guilds (*Arti*) had lately become powerful—so powerful that they were allowed to hold assemblies in the Stanze of the Capitol and to assert their political influence to such an extent that even the Avignon Popes wrote respectful letters to them.

But in Rome the republican movement had never had free play. It was always hampered by the large and powerful body of nobility, which it had never had the courage, or strength, to eject from the Government, as the Florentines had done. Side by side with the republican *Tredici Buoni Uomini* and *Capitani del Popolo* and *Conservatori* we find Roman, or sometimes even foreign, nobles installed as *Senatori*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The title of *Senator Romanorum* or *Summus Senator* was first used regularly, instead of *Patricius*, for the chief official of Rome, actual or honorary, about

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

And now that at Rome was to take place an attempt to revive the ancient Republic, it was bound to prove a failure, for no solid legislative foundation had been accumulated by a long series of republican successes, as in Florence ; indeed, it was bound to degenerate, as it did, into the ambitious endeavour of a single individual to overthrow by his own personality the power of the nobility and to establish himself by main force as despot—for, whatever the dreams of this mad visionary may have been at first, there can be no doubt that soon his ambition extended far beyond any Tribuneship and aimed at a world-wide Empire, of which Rome was to be once more the mistress, and he himself was to be the Augustus.<sup>1</sup>

But, extravagant and ridiculous as Cola's later conduct was, he was assuredly actuated at first by generous motives, and we can pardon such theatrical bombast as *Nicolaus Laurentii, orphanorum, viduarum et pauperum unicus legatus*, when we hear of the terrible state of things that he endeavoured to ameliorate. 'In Rome at that time there were no rulers,' says the author of the *Vita*, speaking as an eye-witness ; 'fighting and robbery went on everywhere daily ; matrons and maidens, aye and even little girls, were dishonoured ; people as they went to their work were waylaid ; pious and defenceless pilgrims were robbed and assassinated ; the priests were ever intent on some criminal act ; every kind of vice and evil flourished ; there was no justice, no appeal from violence, no argument except by the sword ; none was safe who did not rely on the armed bands of his relatives and friends.'

It was amidst such scenes, and at a moment when old

the year 1140. Charles of Anjou was 'Senator Romanorum.' Later a new-elected Pope was generally invested with the title, and often delegated it to some representative. Those who know the Capitol will remember the Palazzo del Senatore and the Palazzo dei Conservatori. For about a century there were two Senators ; after 1358 there was only one.

<sup>1</sup> This is amply proved by his letters and proclamations. Thus to the Florentines he says (1347) he intends to restore the ancient union of holy Italy under the leadership of Rome, and that the gift of *imperium* would reasonably devolve on the holy Roman people. Wherefore, he adds, 'we intend to exalt to the Imperial dignity' some Italian patriot zealous for national unity.



## R O M E (1300-1400)

Stefano Colonna and other prominent nobles were absent from Rome (May 19, 1347), that the conspirators suddenly acted, sending heralds round to invite the people on the morrow to a public assembly on the Capitol. At midnight Cola attended Mass in the church of S. Angelo in Pescheria,<sup>1</sup> and in nightly vigil entreated the aid and inspiration of the Holy Ghost, whose sevenfold gifts he believed to have been vouchsafed to him in his great undertaking. Early next day, which was Whitsunday (Pentecost), he issued forth from the church clad in armour, bareheaded, surrounded by his fellow-conspirators, who bore three banners signifying liberty, justice, and peace. When the procession had ascended the Capitol, Cola harangued the great assembly, proclaiming the new constitution, declaring the nobles incapable of office, and in the name of Jesus Christ entitling himself *severus et clemens libertatis, pacis, justitiæque Tribunus et sacrae Romanae civitatis Liberator*.

The Senators—a Colonna and an Orsini—had fled. Old Stefano returned, but was ordered by Cola to leave the city. His son and the other nobles were summoned to do homage to the Tribune, as also all the judges and other officials and the presidents of the *Arti*. Then Cola dispatches letters announcing his assumption of the Tribuneship to Emperor Ludwig, to the King of France, and to all the Communes and despots of Italy, and his envoys, bearing silver wands, call on the Italian cities to unite with Rome in casting out tyrants and foreign oppressors. And he issued invitations to a national Parliament. How great and how opportune the conception of Cola was, and what magic still lived in the name of Rome, is proved by the enthusiasm with which his messages were greeted. Envoys and deputies from all parts of Italy were to be seen in the streets of Rome, and once more the Capitol seemed to be the centre of Italian politics. Letters of congratulation and advice poured in, from princes and from the Venetian Doge, from signors and cities. Even the Pope himself, though at first taken aback, sent a gracious response,

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* in the Fish-market. It is within the Portico of Octavia, not far from the Tarpeian Rock.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

together with a silver casket whereon were engraved the arms of Rome and its two rulers—the Pontiff and the Tribune.

For us perhaps the most interesting of these missives is the *Epistola hortatoria* sent by Petrarca to Cola, who is extolled as combining the greatness of Romulus, Camillus, and Brutus, and called upon to extirpate insolent aliens *whom the Rhine or Rhone or some other ignoble corner of the world has sent us*.<sup>1</sup>

It was probably about the same time that Petrarca in his first ingenuous enthusiasm wrote his celebrated Canzone *Spirto gentil*, addressed to Cola,<sup>2</sup> in which he laments the sleepy indifference of Italy, and sighs for the power to seize her by the hair and awake her, while he speaks with rapture of Rome awakened to a new day by a hero enthroned 'above the Mount Tarpeian,' the fame of whom will rejoice in Elysium the shades of the Scipios, of Fabricius, and of Brutus. The Canzone is, of course, full of elegancies and transparencies, and has some vigorous lines, but no such *élan* as that of the impetuous, if misdirected, eloquence of Byron's stanza in which he bids us turn from Italy's ten thousand tyrants to her latest Tribune's name—to that

Redeemer of dark centuries of shame,  
The friend of Petrarch, hope of Italy,  
Rienzi, last of Romans.

Extravagant and theatrical as Cola's designs and actions seem, they were at this period based on a true conception of the Italian character and the magical influence of the name of Rome.<sup>3</sup> In regard to the city itself he at first exercised

<sup>1</sup> Among the Roman nobles there were many of German or Gothic origin, such as the Colonna, the Savelli, the Gaetani, etc. Note that chief of these 'insolent aliens' were Petrarca's great friends and patrons, the Colonnese!

<sup>2</sup> Abbé de Sade (see p. 154 n.) thought that Petrarca addressed the Canzone to old Stefano Colonna—which would make its date considerably earlier. But both in spirit and in form the Canzone has a remarkable affinity to the Hortatory Letter.

<sup>3</sup> Petrarca wrote at this time: 'it seems as if an incantation of wizardry [*incanto di malia*] had struck all Italy.' We are assured by an old chronicler that Cola's name excited reverence and fear even in the breast of the 'Sultan of Babylon.' That beats the panic caused at Rome by the 'Thunder of Oliver Cromwell's cannons at the mouth of the Tiber.'

## ROME (1300-1400)

his almost absolute power with discretion, if with a severity such as had ever proved necessary for overcoming the many-headed hydra of Roman faction. He deposed the two Senators but kept the Greater and Lesser Councils. He exercised justice impartially but was pitiless against turbulence and outrage. Among those who suffered death for brigandage was an ex-Senator, who was hanged on the Capitol, where shortly before he had sat as chief magistrate. He abolished the existing titles of the nobility—making those of the Pope an exception—and tore down coats of arms, declaring all honours and offices henceforth in the gift of the Roman people. The powers that he arrogated to himself as Tribune were dictatorial.<sup>1</sup> He issued coins, of which two specimens exist, stamped with his own name. He had a private force of 390 knights, splendidly accoutred, and 1300 foot-soldiers, and a body-guard of a hundred spearmen drawn from his native city-quarter (the 'Regola'), where his father once had his tavern; and he rode abroad robed in a vestment of white silk fringed with gold, with a mantle of green and yellow velvet, mounted on a white charger and holding in his hand a sceptre of steel, while a standard-bearer at his side waved above him a banner inwoven with his arms; and when he visited the basilica of St. Peter the ecclesiastics would come forth to welcome him, chanting the *Veni, Creator Spiritus*.

The national Parliament was summoned (1347) for the beginning of August, the season at which ancient Rome used to celebrate the great festival of the Emperor Augustus (*Feriae Augusti*). Twenty-five of the chief Italian cities<sup>2</sup> had sent deputies, most of them accompanied by splendid retinues. The idea was great and the moment extraordinarily propitious. Emperors and Popes had retired from the scene; the nobility had been overpowered; many important cities had declared for republican liberty; Rome, the metropolis of the ancient world, still exercised such marvellous attraction on the imagina-

<sup>1</sup> Wisely, or hypocritically, he had insisted on holding the Tribuneship for only two months; but the Romans 'tore their garments in terror and swore they would rather die than let him resign' (Gregorovius).

<sup>2</sup> As natural, Ghibelline Pisa was not represented.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

tion of men that it might easily have become (as it did become five centuries later) a centre round which Italy could have gathered a national form. But for such organic development a creative *tertia vis* is requisite—and here, in spite of all delusive appearances, the creative power was wanting. Cola's genius—if it ever existed—failed at the critical moment. The magnificent and dramatic displays with which for a time he had so strongly impressed the Italians seem suddenly to have degenerated into burlesque. One feels that one is on the slippery brink of madness when one reads descriptions, such as the following, of some of the ceremonies that took place during the presence in Rome of the national deputies (August 1347).

A striking specimen of these spectacular displays was that which on August 1<sup>1</sup> attended Cola's assumption of the title 'Cavalier of the Bath'—one of those titles which used to be conferred in the Middle Ages, amidst fantastic ceremonies, by princes and by republics. After a magnificent procession Cola and his splendid retinue arrived at the Lateran Baptistery. Here there is still to be seen the huge green basalt bath in which, tradition says, Constantine the Great was cleansed from paganism and leprosy. Into this great bath or font, filled with perfumed water, Cola entered, while the scandalized papal legate—says Gregorovius—with gloomy visage looked on at the profanation of the oldest baptismal vessel in Christendom. Then issuing forth from his bath the new Cavalier is enveloped in white wrappings and couched for the night in a grand bed<sup>2</sup> that had been erected under the porphyry-columned *rotonda* of the Baptistery. Next morning, robed in scarlet, he mounts to the *loggia* on the east front of the Lateran basilica, from which the Popes were wont to give the Jubilee blessing. Here, in the sight of a vast multitude, he is invested with the sword and golden spurs of knighthood, and as the Vessel of the Holy Spirit and the Supreme Head

<sup>1</sup> The *fête* of the 'Chains of St. Peter,' for which see *Medieval Italy*, p. 113. For the Lateran Baptistery and the Bath of Constantine see *ibid.*, p. 303.

<sup>2</sup> Which, they say, broke down in an ominous fashion during the night.



## ROME (1300-1400)

of the Holy Roman People he gives his Benediction to all the human race—*Urbi et Orbi*. Moreover, he summons any who may claim to be,<sup>1</sup> or to have the power to elect, emperors, kings, princes, dukes, or other magnates, to appear before his tribunal with proofs of their claims, seeing that the Roman people and the national Parliament formed the one legal electoral body. It is said that the papal legate, in a fury of indignation, tried to protest, but his voice was drowned in a blast of trumpets. These melodramatic scenes were followed by feasting and festivities—one feature of which was wine lavishly spouted from the nostrils of the bronzen ‘horse of Constantine,’ which in that age stood before the Lateran, but is now known as the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius and stands in the piazza of the Capitol. Homage is next paid by officials and nobles—the only exceptions being certain of the Colonna and Gaetani—to the ‘Cavalier and Candidate of the Holy Spirit, the Liberator of the City, the Friend of the World, the august Tribune’; flags and rings symbolical of the new confederation are then distributed among the envoys of the Italian states,<sup>2</sup> and the ceremony ends.

An even more ridiculous scene must have been that of Cola’s coronation with seven garlands (some of them made of plants from the Arch of Constantine) which were supposed to symbolize the seven gifts of the Spirit, and were placed on his head by seven different officials. His presumption is said



COLA DI RIENZO  
See List of Illustrations

<sup>1</sup> At this moment there were two rival ‘Emperors,’ Ludwig and Charles. See List 1.

<sup>2</sup> The Florentines are said to have declined them.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

even to have gone so far that he claimed similitude with the Saviour—anyhow in respect of his age, which in 1347 was about 33 years. Another claim that he put forward, and one that showed little respect for his mother, was that he was not the son of the tavern-keeper of the Regola, but a bastard son of Henry of Luxemburg.

No wonder that Petrarca's enthusiasm had changed into a suspicion of insanity and into lamentation. From Genoa he wrote to Cola a letter in which he exclaimed: *Facilis descensus Averni! Ubi tunc ille tuus salutaris genius? . . . Tu quoque longum vale, Roma, si haec vera sunt! Indos ego potius aut Garamantos petam.* Pope Clement, too, was growing daily more hostile. The reports sent to Avignon by his legate—whose consternation at Cola's doings we have noted—roused his indignation. Moreover, his approval of Cola's earlier designs had been (as was, and is, and ever will be the case with papal approval of any policy) based solely on the lust for temporal power. Cola's new Republic he had thought likely to counteract effectively Germanic Imperialism. But Cola's Imperialistic ambitions were for him more alarming than the fictitious Holy Roman Empire. He therefore graciously accepted the overtures of the transalpine Caesar. This Caesar was Charles IV, grandson of Henry of Luxemburg, and son of that old blind John of Bohemia who in the August of 1346 was killed at Crécy. While his father was still alive, in April 1346, Charles had visited Pope Clement at Avignon and had made many promises, such as Caesars are ever wont to make to Popes in regard to the 'Roman question' and the temporal power, receiving in return a promise of papal sanction and support in the assumption of the Imperial title—although the so-called Emperor, Ludwig the Bavarian, was still alive.<sup>1</sup> Thus for a year or more there were rival Emperors; but in 1347 Ludwig was killed by a fall from his horse, and Charles, already King of Bohemia, was recognized as the transalpine King of the Romans and Emperor, and

<sup>1</sup> It will be remembered that Ludwig had never been recognized by the Avignon Popes, having been crowned at Rome by Sciarra Colonna.

## ROME (1300-1400)

was promised by the Pope coronation in Rome under the condition that he should remain only one day in the pontifical city and never again set foot on dominions of the Holy Church. To such depths of degradation had the 'Holy Roman Empire,' and the Papacy, arrived!

This decrepitude of the two great medieval Powers explains Cola's success. But his success was to be shortlived.<sup>1</sup> His audacity had been of late much increased by flatteries and requests for alliance from the notorious Joanna of Naples, who had just married the suspected murderer of her first husband, and also from this murdered man's brother, King Ludwig of Hungary,<sup>2</sup> and he was so carelessly self-confident as to enrage the Colonna and Orsini by imprisonment and then liberate them under humiliating promises of submission. The natural consequence was a desperate attempt to overthrow the tyrant. A large body of nobles collected their forces at Palestrina, the ancient Praeneste, and made (November 1347) an attack on Rome. They were met and defeated by Cola's troops outside the Porta Maggiore. A great slaughter took place. More than eighty nobles were slain, among them the young Stefano and five others of the Colonna—so that, like the ancient *gens Fabia*, the family was almost extirpated, old Stefano, over 80 years of age, being one of the few survivors.<sup>3</sup>

This victory proved a disaster for Cola on account of the insane and brutal use that he made of it. One of his revolting acts especially excited the indignation of the Roman people and the soldiery. Having ridden forth to view the battleground he came to the place where young Stefano Colonna had been slain, and where his life-blood still formed a pool. Here he made his own son dismount, and throwing over him some of the liquid gore, he exclaimed, 'With this thou art

<sup>1</sup> From his assumption of the Tribuneship (May 19, 1347) to his flight (January 24, 1348)—eight months and five days.

<sup>2</sup> See chapter on Naples, and Table II.

<sup>3</sup> See Table, p. 22. When he entered Rome on the fall of Cola he took no revenge. He died probably the next year. Petrarca, who visited him in his old age, says he was like some old Roman hero, 'such as Julius Caesar or Scipio Africanus.'

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

baptized as Knight of Victory.' No wonder that, as the writer of the *Vita* says, 'all present marvelled, yea, and were greatly astonished.' The papal legate joined in the popular outcry against this brutality, which ultimately elicited from Avignon the thunderbolt of excommunication. As for Petrarca, he gave it all up in despair—*Mihi restat nihil*, he wrote, *praeter lacrimas*.

Then all collapsed. What was the immediate cause, it is difficult to say. Perhaps it was the papal thunderbolts; for Clement had addressed violent letters to the Romans, anathematizing the Tribune as a pagan and heretic and tainted wether, and had threatened Interdict. But there must have been a great deal that was rotten in the man himself beneath all his ostentatious and defiant exterior. Cowardly agitation caused him to suffer from agues and faints and terrific dreams. Ere long the troops refused to obey his summons; the great bell of the Capitol sounded and there was no response. Suddenly a report was spread (December 1347) that he had left the Capitol with a small number of his body-guard and had taken refuge in the Castel S. Angelo. A month later it was known that he had escaped to Naples.

Thus, after about eight months, ended the sensational first part of this strange drama, which, like the story of Napoleon, was to have a still more sensational sequel. During the next five years—until the death of Clement VI—the internal state of Rome offers little of striking interest. The government was carried on by the nobles and by papal authorities, and there were only the usual risings and short-lived victories of the people, incapable of organized action without a leader.<sup>1</sup> It will therefore be better to recount briefly the fortunes of Cola until his return to Rome in 1354 and his tragic end.

Naples, whither Cola had fled,<sup>2</sup> was momentarily in the

<sup>1</sup> For a time (1353) one of the Baroncelli was made chief of the Republic, after the Senator Orsini had been stoned. He assumed the title *Urbis Tribunus Secundus*. He was turned out, perhaps killed, when Cola was recalled.

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps he only took refuge in Neapolitan territory, not in Naples. This may have been because of the Black Death.



## R O M E (1300-1400)

power of Ludwig, King of Hungary, who had driven out Queen Joanna (see chapter on Naples). Pope Clement demanded the surrender of the fugitive; but Cola escaped. For something like two years<sup>1</sup> he seems to have been with Franciscan hermits, the 'Little Brothers' of Monte Majella in the Abruzzi—visionaries and devotees to the 'poverty of Christ,' a sect detested by the Popes. One of these hermits, it is said, unfolded to Cola certain prophecies of Merlin (!) which clearly intimated him as the New Messiah and the Messenger of the Holy Ghost; and the ecstatic bade him facilitate the fulfilment of the prophecy by appealing to the transalpine Emperor, Charles IV, whose coronation in Rome was still unaccomplished, but in co-operation with whom he would be able to make Rome what Heaven destined it to be—the holy seat of the two Powers, the Papacy and the Empire, which were (as Dante had taught in his *De Monarchia*) necessary for the spiritual and temporal government of mankind.

In the summer of 1350 he therefore set forth in disguise, preceded by high-flown épistles, on the long journey to Prag, where Charles, as King of Bohemia, held his court. He was received with a show of friendliness, but the Emperor seems soon to have regarded him with a suspicion of insanity and a feeling of contempt. And this was doubtless much deepened by the fact that the renegade republican now asserted that he had never denied the 'divine rights of the Germans to imperial lordship over Italy' and gloried in his own blood-relationship to the Emperor—for Charles was his illegitimate nephew, so to speak, seeing that he himself was the son of Henry of Luxemburg and not of a Roman tavern-keeper! Pope Clement VI was naturally furious when he heard that the anathematized ex-Tribune was courting his Imperial ally, and his fury was increased when he learnt that Cola intended

<sup>1</sup> In his letters to Charles IV and the Archbishop of Prag he says *thirty* months, and this seems likely, as he probably left Rome for Naples in January 1348 and started for Prag in August 1350. The editor of the *Vita* asserts that Cola visited Rome during the Jubilee (1350) in disguise. Petrarca was certainly there, for he describes with dismay the desolation of the palace of his friends, the Colonna, and of the scene of his own coronation.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

him to play merely a spiritual *rôle* in the new World-Empire. He is said to have expressed an ardent desire to have him burnt. Charles did not go so far as this, but in deference to Clement's vehemence he imprisoned, or interned, his guest in the castle of Raudnitz on the Elbe, and, if we are to believe the writer of the *Vita*, Cola's natural nobility of character (and certainly there was an element of the heroic in his exceedingly composite nature) resented so keenly the indignity that he requested to be surrendered to the Pope. Anyhow, to Avignon he was sent (July 1352). Here Clement ignobly imprisoned him in one of the towers of that huge Palais des Papes, or that grim fortress of Villeneuve, which were now, together with the city of Avignon, the property of the Pontiff; for Joanna of Naples, as a bribe for papal absolution from the charge of murder, had in 1348 ceded to Clement this patrimony of hers for the ridiculous price of 80,000 golden florins.

Clement did not dare to burn Cola. The magnificent audacity of his ideas had worked too strongly on the imagination of men. Even the Emperor Charles was evidently more impressed than he had cared to confess by his suggestions and vaticinations. Petrarca too, though he rather unkindly refused to visit the prisoner, uttered lamentation and wrote to the Romans, entreating them to recall their Tribune (*Ad Pop. Rom. Epist. III*—a very eloquent and dignified appeal), so that luckily for Cola, or perhaps unluckily, liberation and recall were practically secured when, a few months later, Pope Clement died. His successor, the Frenchman Innocent VI, fired with the ambition to re-establish papal authority in what he regarded as the States of the Church, listened willingly to the counsels of a Spanish grandee and warrior, Gil d'Albornoz, who had exchanged the war-helm for the hat of a cardinal and was now elected papal Legate and Vicar-General of Italy on his promise to resume the sword and reconquer from the various despots and republican governments the cities of the papal Patrimony; and in these designs Cola from his prison-tower seems to have been able to take a part. His faith in the divine rights of Germanic lordship had opportunely given

## ROME (1300-1400)

place to a no less fervid faith in the divine rights of the French Pontiff, and he proposed to use his influence as Roman Tribune in order to abolish Signories and to unite under papal sovereignty all the cities of Italy in a single republic, of which Rome should be the capital.

With such favour were Cola's proposals received that he was liberated and absolved from anathema by Innocent. He accompanied the militant cardinal to Italy and remained with him during his autumn and spring campaign of 1353-1354. Then the Romans sent envoys to Perugia urging Albornozy to allow him to return as Senator to Rome; and their prayer was granted. The entry of Cola on August 1—an ominous date—was triumphant. All the chivalry of Rome, says the *Vita*, came forth to meet him as far as Monte Mario with olive-branches in their hands. Houses and palaces were gaily decorated with tapestries and flags and flowers; windows, balconies, and roofs were crowded with applauding spectators—as when great Pompey passed the streets of Rome. The supreme magistrate resigned into the hands of the new Senator the sceptre of office. A great assembly was held, and Cola once more, as in days past, from his old palace on the Capitol harangued the people. He told them that, like Nebuchadnezzar, he had for seven years been driven forth as a mad thing to wander from the habitations of men, but that he meant now to rule strongly and to exalt the state of Rome. The Romans applauded; but somehow it seemed to fall a little flat. Cola was no longer the youthful and fiery enthusiast of other days. In the place of their own 'Tribune'—the refounder of the Roman Republic—there stood before them an official of the French Pope, a middle-aged and rather corpulent functionary.

Not for long did Cola succeed in balancing himself, so to speak, on the dizzy and slippery height that he had again attained. With incomprehensible folly he soon began to wreak revenge by bloody reprisals, and in order to pay his body-guard of mercenaries he began to increase exorbitantly the taxes on wine and salt. On October 8 a riot took place.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

At first Cola disregarded it as of no importance. But the shouts that ere long reached him in his Capitoline fastness revealed the fury and the determination of the mob. *Death!* was the cry: *Muoia il traditore che ha fatto la gabella!* (the tax). Then, vesting himself in the panoply of a *Cavaliere*, and bearing in his hand the Banner of the Roman People, he issued forth on to a balcony and endeavoured to address the multitude. But the Romans doubtless feared his power of fascination. They would not listen, but, says the *Vita*, 'behaved like pigs, hurling stones and shooting with cross-bows and running up with fire to burn the gates.' Though he was wounded in one hand, he continued waving the banner and pointing to its letters of gold. But it was all in vain, and he had to choose between going forth in his armour to meet a warrior's death or to try to escape, and 'since,' says the *Vita*, 'he was a man, as all other men he feared to die.' The wooden gates were already on fire and flames and smoke were filling the palace. 'He divested himself of his baronial trappings [*le insegne di baronia*], and laying aside his arms (ah, how grievous to think thereon!) he scissored off his beard, and dyed his face with a black dye. Nigh at hand was a poor habitation where the gate-keeper slept. Here entering he caught up an old cloak of common cloth, fashioned as those worn by country shepherds. This coarse cloak he threw about him. Then he put around his head a bed-cloth, and thus attired he descends. He passes the blazing gate and the stairs and the terror of the falling ceiling; he passes the lowest gate safely (fire touched him not) and mingled with the crowd. Disguised, he disguised his voice, and he spake rustic and called out: "There, up there! Arter 'im, the traitor!" [*Suso, suso, agliu traditore!*] . . . He got safely down the last flight of steps, for the people were all gazing intently upwards at the palace; but just as he had passed the last gate some one who met him recognized him and laid hands on him, exclaiming, "Stop! where are you going?" and dragged off his head that coverlet; and he was betrayed especially by the gleam of his golden bracelets, which showed



## ROME (1300-1400)

that he was no common hooligan. So he was discovered ; and they took him by the arm and led him to the place of the lion, where verdicts are wont to be pronounced. Where he himself had sentenced others, thither he was taken ; and there was silence, and none was so bold as to touch him. There he stood for somewhat less than an hour, his beard shorn off, his visage black as a baker's, in a vest of green silk, ungirt, with his gilt *musacchini* [armour-clips ?], with his purple leggings in fashion of a baron, and with his arms folded. In the midst of this silence he moved his face and gazed in this direction and in that. Then Cecco del Vecchio took a dagger and gave him one in the stomach. He was the first. Immediately after him followed the notary Treio, who gave him one on the head with his sword ; then another and another. He uttered no word, but died at once and painlessly.' The writer then gives a terribly graphic account of how the body was dragged through the streets till it was headless and torn to tatters, and how the corpulent trunk hung up by the feet looked like that of a ' huge buffalo, or a fresh-slaughtered cow.' Then, after serving for two days as a cock-shy for boys, it was dragged out to the Campo di Augusta and burnt by Jews on a bonfire of dry thistles ; ' and by reason of its fatness it blazed willingly, and not a particle thereof was left—*non ne rimase cica.*' Such was the end of Cola di Rienzo.

\* \* \* \* \*

### FROM THE DEATH OF COLA DI RIENZO TO 1400

At the very time (October 1354) that this tragic event was taking place the so-called Emperor, Charles IV of Bohemia, was starting on what proved an exceedingly inglorious *Römerzug*—a ' descent ' into Italy undertaken with the main object of obtaining in Rome the papal and popular confirmation of his Imperial title. His nominal object was to chastise the archiepiscopal Signor of Milan, Giovanni Visconti, against whom he was summoned as ' liberator ' by the allied Venetians and Florentines. But Giovanni died and was succeeded by his three nephews (see chapter on Milan, and Table IV), and

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

they<sup>1</sup> won over by gifts the weak-willed Charles, whom they permitted to assume the Iron Crown in S. Ambrogio (Milan) before proceeding to Rome. On Easter Day 1355 he was crowned in St. Peter's by a cardinal, the Archbishop of Ostia. But from Pope Innocent at Avignon orders had come that the Emperor should remain only one day within the city, and it was only after much fasting and prayer that he was allowed, clothed as a pilgrim, to visit from his camp outside the walls some of the principal churches. Then, with the coveted crown in his valise, after paying a visit to the Falls at Tivoli, he hurried northwards. Siena received him coldly, and after his departure violently expelled his brother, whom he had left there as Imperial Vicar. Pisa gave him what one can hardly call a cold reception, seeing that the Pisans tried to set fire to the palace, and he and his Empress barely escaped in their night-clothes. In Lombardy he found most of the city-gates closed against him; Cremona only allowed him and a few of his unarmed followers to enter within her walls like a party of ordinary travellers. Petrarca, who had, alas, accepted the hospitality and friendship of the tyrants of Milan, and had written divers fulsome epistles to the 'grandson of the great Henry,' inviting him to Italy, now launched winged words of bitter contempt that pursued the 'Roman Emperor' as he hurried stealthily across the Italian plain and over the Alps, *die et nocte equitans, ut in fuga* (as says an old chronicler), to reach his native wilds of Bohemia. And it was now indeed high time that Petrarca should realize that Dante's vision of an ideal State—an Earthly Paradise illuminated by the two suns of the Papacy and the Empire—was of such stuff as dreams are made of. 'Even the mad Tribune'—says Gregorovius (a Teuton!)—'had interpreted the signs of the times better than Dante and Petrarca with their visions of a Teutonic Messiah.' These visions of Germanic lordship over Italy were fading away into the daylight, and the ridiculous *Römerzug* of Charles IV showed the world plainly what the once mighty Holy Roman Empire had

<sup>1</sup> The eldest, Matteo, died very soon (poisoned by his brothers?).

## ROME (1300-1400)

become and the evil it had wrought. The woes brought on Italy by barbarian invaders had been innumerable, and when the dragon of Teuton domination at last withdrew to its northern lair, it left behind many a contagious plague-spot, from which ever again burst forth intestine feuds, and many a horde of Germanic mercenaries, who for years to come proved, as Petrarca himself tells us, the bane of Italy.

Charles IV was not cast in the mould of Charles the Great. Though his ambitions were Imperial he was no empire-builder.<sup>1</sup> But he was perhaps something better. He seems to have ruled his Bohemians justly and wisely, and was induced by Petrarca, it is said, to found the University of Prag—of which not very long afterwards John Huss was the Rector.

The ridicule excited by the inglorious retreat of Charles IV had favoured Cardinal Albornoz in his reconquest of the Papal States, all the chief cities of which were brought into submission between 1356 and 1360. Thus, except in the powerful Signoria of Milan, where the Visconti were fiercely hostile to republicanism and to the Papacy, democracy (Guelfism) was for the time preponderant.

At Rome during these years the cry *Popolo! Popolo!* which had excited the people to such fury against Cola di Rienzo, became ever louder and more frequent. The nobles cowered in obscurity, and laws, like the famous *Ordinamenti* at Florence, excluded them from the government and the army. A democratic Council, called the 'Seven Reformers' or the *Septemviri* (successors to the *Tredecimviri*), and two captains of the city militia called *Banderesi* (Standard-bearers) controlled the Senator, who was the only magistrate allowed to be elected by the Pope and was generally a foreigner—an arrangement meant to prevent the election of a Roman noble and the possibility of feuds.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> His childish delight at having secured the Iron and Golden Crowns, and the irritation caused by his treatment by the Italians, found expression on his return to Prag, in 1356, in the promulgation of the famous *Golden Bull*, which confirmed Ludwig's *Constitutions* (of 1337) and made the Germanic 'Holy Roman Empire' wholly independent of Rome.

<sup>2</sup> The same antidote was tried in the case of the *Podestà* of North Italian cities.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

The suppression of many Signories by the soldier-cardinal Albornoz had to such an extent re-established the temporal power of the Papacy in Italy that Innocent VI seriously thought of a return from Avignon to Rome; but he was old and infirm, and in 1362 he died, leaving his design to be attempted by his successor, Urban V, and to be accomplished, in 1377, by Gregory XI; and it is the reigns of these two pontiffs that will now for a time claim our attention.

Urban V was a monk of Languedoc who had risen to the dignity of papal nuntius at the court of Joanna of Naples. On his election the Romans sent envoys to acknowledge his sovereignty (*dominium*) and once more to entreat the restoration to Rome of the Holy Seat. Their arguments were strongly reinforced by the success of Cardinal Albornoz, who, after subduing Romagna and other regions, had at last made himself master of Bologna and forced the brutal and violent Bernabò Visconti to accept a peace. Moreover, Petrarca bombarded the Pontiff with Epistles—one was eighteen pages long—denouncing Avignon-Babylon and urging the Return with all the scholarship and vehemence that he could command. On the other side there was the fierce opposition of the French cardinals and the French King; but France and Avignon offered no longer such safe and pleasant sojourn. Hordes of ferocious soldiery, let loose by the Peace of Brétigny (1360), were spreading terror and devastation on all sides, and the Black Death had carried off at Avignon no less than nine cardinals and 70 other prelates, to say nothing of 19,000 ordinary inhabitants. Therefore, when the maritime Italian cities offered a fleet, and Emperor Charles offered his escort, Urban accepted, and left Avignon in the spring of 1367.

Petrarca describes with scorn how the great armada of 60 galleys put to sea from Marseille, loaded with enormous piles of the baggage of the multitudinous prelates and their retinues, male and female, and how they wailed for the flesh-pots and wines of France that they were exchanging for the



## ROME (1300-1400)

hardships of a distant and barbarous land. At the port <sup>1</sup> of Corneto their arrival was awaited by a vast company of Roman and Italian notabilities, among whom was the 'tamer of tyrants,' Alborno. During the summer Urban remained at Viterbo, receiving homage, making alliances, and awaiting developments—two of which proved to be the death of Alborno and a riot of the good people of Viterbo, who were so scandalized at the luxury, the vices, and the insolence of certain French cardinals that they attacked their palaces and fluttered seriously the papal dove-cotes. In October Rome is at last reached, and Urban, having made his entry amidst troops and trumpeters with such pomp and ceremony as seldom graced the triumph of any Caesar, takes his seat on the papal throne in St. Peter's.

For three years Urban resided at Rome, or rather in its vicinity,<sup>2</sup> for Rome had become a city of desolation. Almost all the chief churches were closed; many, as St. Peter's and S. Paolo fuori, were rapidly falling to ruin. The Lateran basilica, rebuilt quite lately and adorned by Giotto, had been again burnt down (1360); streets were blocked with *débris* of houses and palaces or were almost impassable for garbage; most of the nobles had withdrawn to their country castles; the working classes were impoverished, savage, and turbulent; the number of inhabitants, it is said, scarcely exceeded 20,000.

At first Urban acted with some vigour. He began to rebuild the Lateran and other churches. He dissolved the republican *Septemviri* and instituted a supreme municipal Council that has lasted until our days—the *Consiglio dei Conservatori*. He also tried to put Rome into a condition to offer a not too disgraceful reception to several very distinguished visitors, who came to pay their respects to the reinstated Roman Pontiff. Firstly came Queen Joanna I, who had been (except

<sup>1</sup> The old port (Graviscae) of Tarquinii has disappeared, and the later Porto Clementino hardly exists any more.

<sup>2</sup> Mostly at Montefiascone ('Big-bottle-hill'), doubtless attracted thither by its wine, the quality of which is testified to by the famous epitaph in the church to the memory of the Canon of Augsburg, who died of drinking too much '*Est Est.*'

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

for a short exile) 25 years on the throne of Naples and had been absolved by Pope Clement VI from the, probably true, charge of having murdered her first husband, and was now married to a third. Then came a Lusignan King of Cyprus. Then Emperor Charles, unabashed, unwisely decides to visit Rome once more, with the nominal object of aiding Urban and the northern republics against the brutal Bernabò Visconti; but after having debased himself by entering the city leading the Pope's palfrey and by performing acolyte duties at High Mass in St. Peter's, and having got his fourth wife crowned as Empress, he once again slinks back to Bohemia, his wallets heavy with bribes received from cities for aid against the Visconti—which he failed to give. Lastly, another 'Emperor' arrives—Johannes Palaeologus of Constantinople, who supplicates help against the Turk. Thus in the course of a few months Urban sees at his feet the successors of Charles the Great and of Justinian—but what phantoms!

Urban of Languedoc had never felt at home in Italy, and even all the successes of Albornož had failed to give him that sense of reposeful security which he had experienced at Avignon, while his cardinals lamented ever more piteously their Babylonish captivity in Italy. He therefore decided to go, and after having satisfactorily performed a big function which he wished to be associated with his name—the transference of the heads of St. Peter and St. Paul, in silver busts, to the Tabernacle of the Lateran basilica—he secretly left Rome. At Viterbo he proclaimed his resolve, which excited no less consternation among the Romans than exultation among the cardinals and papal courtiers, and shortly afterwards His Holiness was to be seen standing on the poop of his galley at the port of Corneto and dispensing his blessing to a lamenting multitude.

In Rome there had been living since Cola's first Tribuneship a lady of princely Swedish blood, St. Brigit, who devoted herself to the poor. She professed to hold converse with the Saviour, and was regarded as a prophetess.<sup>1</sup> It was reported

<sup>1</sup> Not, of course, the Irish St. Brigit, or St. Bride, who was of much earlier date.

## R O M E (1300-1400)

that she had visited Urban and had unfolded to him that he would die as soon as he again set foot in Avignon; and her prophecy was fulfilled, or nearly so; for soon after his arrival, worn out by the fatigues of the long journey, he collapsed. Lying on a poor bed and clad in the cowl of a Benedictine monk he passed away, it is said, surrounded by a number of prelates and nobles whom he had invited to come and see how, in the presence of death, the pomps of papal courts are shadows, not substantial things.

When Urban V left Rome the Romans had recovered to some extent their republican independence, but on the election of the next Pope, Gregory XI, another Limousin of noble birth, they offered him<sup>1</sup> the Senatorial dignity and once more urged the return of the Papacy. St. Brigit added her persuasions, ominously enforced by the prophecy that he would soon die if he remained at Avignon. But ere that was fulfilled her own life came to an end (1373).

The return of the Papacy to Rome—an event that had very far-reaching consequences and may well occupy our attention for a few minutes—was not primarily due, as is often believed, to incentives of a doctrinal or emotional nature, but to less laudable motives. What prevailed with Gregory was not the arguments and personality of St. Catharine of Siena, or the entreaties of the Romans, but the fact that Urban's *gran rifiuto* had been followed by a general revolt of the States of the Church lately subdued by Albornoz; and to this fact was added the fear that the Visconti (Bernabò and his brother Galeazzo II) were endeavouring to establish themselves as kings of United Italy. In their continual wars against these Milanese despots the Popes had naturally found a zealous ally in Florence. But greed for temporal sovereignty always made the Papacy a very insincere friend of republican liberty, and now that French Popes had by means of their Spanish emissary (Albornoz) reduced to vassalage a great part of Central Italy, all true lovers of liberty felt hot indignation against these new 'foreign oppressors'; and their indignation was developed

<sup>1</sup> Not as Pope, but as Count Roger de Beaufort.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

into open hostility by the attacks made on Tuscany by ferocious papal mercenaries, such as those led by the English *condottiere*, John Hawkwood. The result was that a National League was formed in order to expel from Italy these alien mercenaries and their suborners, the 'evil pastors of the Church,' as the Avignon Popes and their satellites were called. A red banner bearing the word *LIBERTAS* was carried from city to city and excited great enthusiasm. Even the Visconti joined in the crusade against the foreigner, and Florence, the implacable foe of tyranny, allied herself with the tyrants of Milan in order to crush the French papal party and their hired cut-throats; and at a signal from Florence all the chief cities of the Papal States rose in revolt.

All now depended on Rome; and it was Rome that now in her turn 'through cowardice made the great refusal' and proved faithless to her ideal of a United Italy; for when the Florentine magistrates, the 'Eight Saints of War,' sent envoys begging the Romans to remember their former proposals and to help in ejecting 'the barbarian'—this time, the papal tyrant!—they received the chill response that Rome shrank from joining any enterprise directed against Holy Church. To this the Saints replied that Holy Church and French papal tyrants were two very different things.

Meanwhile Pope Gregory vacillates and sends envoys to the Florentines—but in vain. Bologna itself revolts and rises to the cry, *Muoia la Chiesa!* and it is followed by Genoa and Pisa. Then he launches a terrific volley of Interdicts, outlawing every citizen of these cities—especially the Florentines—in *orbe terrarum*.<sup>1</sup> The Florentines defy his thunderbolts and reopen the churches. Hereupon he sends bands of Bretons and Gascons under the bloodthirsty and merciless Robert, Cardinal of Geneva (and later Antipope), to subjugate them and the rebel cities; and the atrocities perpetrated by these

<sup>1</sup> In France and England advantage was taken of this Interdict to confiscate property, if not to enslave or murder the owners. Gregorovius writes with horror of Gregory sanctifying robbery and assassination. What would he have said to his own pious Prussian Caesar sanctifying Armenian massacres, Belgian, Lusitanian, Parisian, and other such atrocities?



## ROME (1300-1400)

and other emissaries of the Vicar of Christ are almost too horrible for narration.

At this moment Florence made one of those sudden changes of front that are so frequent and so puzzling in the history of the Italian cities. Perhaps its commercial interests were too strong for idealistic politics. Anyhow, it made overtures to Gregory, sending to Avignon not only political envoys, who failed in their mission, but also St. Catharine of Siena, who did not fail in hers. She had already written eloquent and urgent letters to the Pontiff entreating him to return to Rome, and now added the wondrous persuasion of her personality. How far Gregory, without her persuasion, would have acted otherwise than he did act is a question as difficult to answer as how far Petrarca influenced Pope Urban. In Gregory's case, as we have seen, there were very sufficient motives with which neither the saint nor the poet<sup>1</sup> would have had any sympathy; but St. Catharine's presence doubtless hastened the Pope's departure. This took place in September 1376, amid the renewed lamentations of the French prelates, who refused to be comforted even by the omen that the pontifical palfrey, when called upon to make a start, obstinately refused to budge.

The return of Gregory XI was far less spectacular than that of Urban had been; indeed it seems to have been a somewhat melancholy affair. After a long and rough voyage they spent what is described as anything but a merry Christmas and New Year (1377) at Corneto. Then, landing at Ostia, where the dreary surroundings of the delta (*dove l'acqua di Tevere s'insala*) deepened the depression of the travellers, they ascended the yellow stream in barges and at midnight were met by a vast crowd at the landing-place near S. Paolo fuori, whence next day they entered Rome by the Porta di San Paolo—a gate that, it is said, no Pope had ever before used on any public occasion.<sup>2</sup> At last, in great weariness and depression,

<sup>1</sup> Petrarca had died two years before (1374).

<sup>2</sup> Totila entered Rome by it, and Charles of Anjou (see *Medieval Italy*, pp. 149, 471). Its name recalls the Cestian pyramid, and Keats, and Shelley.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

the French Pope sinks on his knees before the tomb of the great Apostle in St. Peter's, and the ' Babylonish Captivity ' of nigh 70 years is ended.

The restoration of the Roman Papacy was signalized by one of the most hideous massacres ever perpetrated. Cardinal Robert, the ferocious Archbishop of Geneva, whom Gregory had sent with a horde of Bretons and Gascons to ' pacify ' the rebellious cities of the States of the Church, was holding Cesena when, a fortnight after the papal entry into Rome, the people, driven to despair by brutal treatment, rose against the Breton troops. The prelate called to his aid from Faenza Sir John Hawkwood's English mercenaries, who helped him, it is said, to slaughter in cold blood 4000 of the inhabitants of the little town. Horrified at this grisly human sacrifice, the Romans, already disillusioned and disgusted, showed unmistakable signs of revolt against their alien master, and when, about a year later, Gregory died <sup>1</sup>—worn out by many infirmities at the age of 47—the whole of Rome rose as one man to demand that the next pontiff should be Roman.

Then scenes are enacted that recall Aristophanic comedy. The cardinals, assembled in the Vatican, are besieged by a mob, which collects fuel below the Hall of Conclave, while the Capitani dei Rioni force their way into the presence of the Electors and in the name of the Roman people demand a Roman Pope. After a long and fierce debate the French and Italian cardinals agree to elect the Archbishop of Bari, a Neapolitan ; but they dare not publish the fact, and meantime a report spreads abroad that an old Roman prelate, Tibaldeschi, has been chosen. Hereupon the mob breaks into the Council-hall with shouts of triumph, in order to pay homage to the new Pontiff. The cardinals flee in panic into an adjoining chapel ; but the rioters follow. Then, to save their lives, the cardinals hastily dress up in papal attire the old Tibaldeschi and present him to the mob as the elected Pope ; and the people in frenetic exultation nearly stifle him

<sup>1</sup> His tomb is in the church then called S. Maria Nuova but later named S. Francesca Romana, well known to all who know the Forum.

## ROME (1300-1400)

with kisses, while in some dark corner of the palace the real Pope is crouching in terror. But the poor old Tibaldeschi, fearing to prolong the deception, stands forth and confesses the truth; whereupon the Romans pursue with fury the flying cardinals, who with great difficulty escape, some into the Castel S. Angelo, others into the country, while in the background of the deserted scene remain two cowering figures—that of the real and that of the dummy Pontiff of Christendom.

Strange as it may seem, all this uproar suddenly subsided. The Romans, learning that, though not Roman, the elected Pope was Italian, accepted the situation, and Bartolomeo di Prignano, the Bari Archbishop, mounted the papal throne and took the name of Urban VI, and peace seemed to be assured.

But it was the calm before the storm. Urban, who later developed into a murderous madman, was from the first hot-tempered and masterful. 'Inspired by the demon of discord,' says Gregorovius, but possibly, I think, inspired by a very intelligible indignation, he began at once to inveigh against the outrageous arrogance, luxury, and evil living of many of his prelates, whereupon the fifteen French cardinals form a league against him, headed by the notorious Robert, Cardinal of Geneva, who with his Breton mercenaries holds the Castel S. Angelo, refusing to give it up to the Pope. These 'ultra-montane' cardinals now withdraw to Anagni,<sup>1</sup> some 40 miles south-east of Rome, and proclaim that Urban's election, made in fear of death, was void and null. They summon the four remaining cardinals to attend a Conclave at Anagni. Urban VI suggests a Council, but the Schismatics refuse, and having moved some 40 miles farther south, to Fondi, they entice thither by seductive chances of election their brother cardinals (now three in number, as old Tibaldeschi was dead), and choose as their Pope that Archbishop Robert of Geneva<sup>2</sup> whose hands were red with the blood of the people of Cesena.

<sup>1</sup> Anagni is specially associated with the fate of Boniface VIII. See *Medieval Italy*, p. 487. Dante calls it Alagna (*Purg.* xx, 86).

<sup>2</sup> He assumed the name 'Clement VII,' but these Schismatics are not counted among the Popes. We shall come later to the real Clement VII. The non-Roman Popes during the Schism (1378-1418) differed entirely from

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

It seems marvellous to how great an extent the fury of Urban, deserted by all his cardinals, was influenced by the gentle counsels and the unshaken faith of St. Catharine, who stood by him bravely during this crisis. But even her influence could not prevent him from excommunicating his rival and all the renegade cardinals, whose place he supplied by electing in a single day an entirely new Curia of twenty Roman and Neapolitan *porporati*. Thus was initiated the Great Schism, which lasted for 40 years. Robert of Geneva (the so-called Clement VII) was recognized by France, Savoy, Spain, Scotland, and the Court of Naples; Urban VI by the rest of western Christendom.

The Castel S. Angelo was still held by the French party and the Breton mercenaries. For a whole year Rome was bombarded by their cannons—the first, it is said, used in the great Roman fortress. At last (1379) with the aid of a famous *condottiere*, Alberigo of Romagna, hired by the Pope, the Romans forced the garrison to capitulate, and then set to work to demolish the stronghold. But it proved too huge and strong. They left standing the mighty square mass of *peperino* and the lower *tondo* of travertine, on which was later erected the upper pile that exists at the present day. (For the Angel see *Medieval Italy*, p. 253.) Urban is now able to enter the Vatican, which, together with the Borgo—the *Città Leonina*—had been especially exposed to the fire of the S. Angelo artillery. He does this with solemn ceremony, clad as a penitent and barefoot—an act warmly praised, and perhaps suggested, by St. Catharine.

Meanwhile the rival Pontiff, Clement, in fear of Urban's hired *condottiere*, Alberigo, had fled to Naples, where Queen Joanna, who owed her acquittal and restoration to a French Pope, was naturally disposed to support the Pontiff elected by the French cardinals. But, as will be remembered, Urban was a native of Naples, so it is not surprising that the Neapoli-

'Antipopes' set up by Germanic 'Emperors.' They were deliberately chosen and supported by a powerful section of the Church, and represented the antagonism of two races.



## ROME (1300-1400)

tans rose in his favour. Clement thereupon took ship with his cardinals at Gaeta and escaped to Avignon.

Pope Urban VI was thus left almost supreme in Italy. He was undisputed Head of the so-called Roman Republic, and might have spent his remaining years in comparative peace had he listened to the counsels of St. Catharine. But he still had bitter foes, such as Joanna of Naples, and his ungovernable temper made enemies of many who espoused his cause. The result was that the rest of his pontificate was of the most tempestuous and dramatic nature. First he excommunicates Joanna and declares her deposed. Then he incites and aids Charles of Durazzo, the repudiated heir of Joanna, to come down into Italy and attack her—an enterprise which, as is fully recounted in the chapter about Naples, ended (1382) in the capture and pitiable death of this ill-famed queen. Meantime, in 1380, had died St. Catharine of Siena—a woman of very different character. Her last public act was to calm the fury both of the mob and of the Pope when the Vatican was being assaulted by the Roman people, angered by Urban's violent conduct. On this occasion, probably by St. Catharine's advice, the doors were flung open and the rioters found themselves faced by the old Pontiff, seated on his throne and bidding them come and kill him if they dared.

The very remarkable personality of St. Catharine and her most interesting life have been ably treated by several writers. Here we cannot dwell long on the subject, but may note in passing that her influence, which was so inexplicable as to be attributed to causes more than human, had a very perceptible effect on the history of her age; and the thought may well give us pause that this uneducated daughter of a Sienese dyer, who until some two years before her death could not write, while yet a young woman (for she died before reaching the *mezzo del cammin di nostra vita*), although entirely ignorant of the manners, the intrigues, and the etiquette of courts and high society, and although incapable of speaking any language except the musical but illiterate dialect of her native city, should have been employed as the envoy of Popes and princes

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

and republics, and should have been held in high respect and honour as a correspondent by some of the political, ecclesiastic, and military notabilities of her day.<sup>1</sup>

But we must return to Pope Urban. After Joanna's death (1382) he was at the acme of his power ; but he foolishly begins to meddle in the conflict between Charles of Durazzo (now established at Naples) and the French-Angevin claimants, and much against the wishes of the cardinals goes off to Naples, having escaped by stealth from Rome. He is received grandly but contemptuously by Charles, and ere long his arrogance and interference cause the outbreak of a violent quarrel. Instead of returning to Rome he sets up his court at Nocera de' Pagani (near Pompeii) and surrounds himself with a number of satellites, spies, favourites, and low clerics, and having discovered that his cardinals were taking counsel to transport him to Rome by force (indeed one old chronicler asserts that they intended burning him as a heretic) he throws six of them into an underground dungeon, filthy and full of vermin, where—if we may believe a writer who was an eye- and ear-witness—they were tortured horribly, while the Pope recited texts to keep the torturers up to the mark. The Neapolitan cardinals thereupon declare that an Oecumenical Council should be held to judge Urban, and he straightway lays Naples under Interdict and excommunicates Charles and his Queen. But Charles cares little for such *bruta fulmina* and sends Alberigo (now in *his* pay) to besiege Nocera, offering a large reward for the head of his Holiness—as if he were a common felon.

Compelled by famine, Urban, who had entreated the Genoese to send ships, escapes from Nocera, dragging with him his cardinals loaded with chains. One of these he orders to be

<sup>1</sup> Many of her letters are extant. On every page, as Gregorovius well says, one finds writ large the word 'Reform.' The constant burden of her pathetic appeals to Gregory and Urban is the 'evil condition of the Church.' The pedantic Cruscan Academy refused to accept her writings as 'literature,' but the Letters reach a sphere far beyond the ken of any 'Cruscan quire.' Their natural, unaffected eloquence is praised highly by many competent Italian writers. Catharine might have said what Dante said of himself, 'I am one who, when Love inspireth me, note it, and in that fashion sing as he dictateth.'

## ROME (1300-1400)

stabbed and his body to be left on the roadside—as one used to see done by Arab slave-hunters in Central Africa. With a band of savage mercenaries he reaches Salerno; but here they desert him, and with a few followers he wanders like a bandit-chief through the mountains of Southern Italy till he arrives at Trani, where Genoese vessels rescue him. At Genoa he soon quarrels with the Doge and the nobles, and an attempt to rescue the four remaining cardinals from their shameful captivity so enrages him that he has three put to death—perhaps thrown into the sea in sacks. The fourth, an Englishman, Adam Ashton, owed his life, it is said, to the intercession of the English King, Richard II.

After perpetrating this atrocity Urban took ship, perhaps for the little port of Viareggio, and resided for a time at Lucca. Then (1388) he made his way, accompanied by English mercenaries, to Tivoli, thirsting to revenge himself on the foreign lord of his native city Naples—now Ladislaus, son of Charles of Durazzo, who had died in 1386. But, strange to tell, the Romans now beg him to return. During Urban's absence they had recovered the external forms of independence. The republican officials—the 'Seven,' the *Conservatori*, and the *Banderesi*<sup>1</sup>—had acquired still greater power, and the papal Senator had been dropped. But things had not gone well: war, pestilence, famine, pirates, and internal discords had created much discontent. So they determined once more to try a change.

In a very short time, of course, Urban and the Romans were again at strife, and he was once more besieged in the Vatican. But the old man had a strength of will that sometimes broke down all opposition, and ere long the *Conservatori* and *Banderesi* might have been seen descending the Capitol and wending their way towards St. Peter's, barefoot and with halters round their necks, to receive papal absolution. Urban's triumph was, however, shortlived, for in the next year (1389) he suddenly died.

<sup>1</sup> Elected after Cola's death (see p. 51). The military *Banderesi* soon attained, says Matteo Villani, a judicial and executive power as great as that of the Florentine *Gonfalonieri*.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

His successor, Boniface IX, likewise a Neapolitan, was a young man of thirty, masterful and able, but intensely avaricious. By holding a Jubilee <sup>1</sup> in 1390 and by a brisk export trade in Indulgences he filled his coffers very satisfactorily. His relatives, too, acquired such enormous wealth that we may perhaps date from his pontificate the beginning of that scandalous nepotism which attained its acme of shamelessness in the age of the Borgia Popes.

When, in 1394, Robert of Geneva—the self-styled Clement VII—died at Avignon, the King of France and the University of Paris advised that no successor should be elected; but the French cardinals rejected this counsel and the Schism remained unhealed. The Spaniard who was chosen adopted the title ‘Benedict XIII’—a title later disallowed. He tried to make trouble in Italy, but Boniface IX proved more than his match and made himself master of Rome, effectually paralysing the republican magistrates by means of his Senatorial Vicegerents, who were generally foreigners. A conspiracy that was being hatched by certain ex-Conservatori was crushed, and the ringleaders were executed ‘on the stairs of the Capitol’—on the spot ‘near the cage of the lion’ where Cola di Rienzo was killed—a spot which, like the well-known space between the Piazzetta columns at Venice, had been dyed with the blood of many victims.

To secure his supremacy Boniface rebuilt and fortified the Castel S. Angelo, the partial demolition of which in 1379 has been described, and this huge stronghold has remained in the possession of the Popes until our day—a very solid outward and visible sign of the triumph of the Papacy in its long struggle with the Roman people and against the cause of democratic liberty.

When we come to the story of Rome in the 15th century we shall see how the Great Schism ended by the restoration of the almost unquestioned supremacy over Western Christen-

<sup>1</sup> Jubilees, at first centennial, had already become more frequent, as they proved very profitable. We hear of Jubilees in 1300, 1350, 1390, 1400, 1450, 1475, and so on.



## ROME (1300-1400)

dom of the Roman Popes. Thus it came about that, the nobility having withdrawn from the conflict and having sunk into political impotence, and the Roman Republic, which had so often had a transient revival in medieval times, having finally succumbed to the rule of a despot, the city of Rome—once mistress of the world—was doomed to remain until our day the humble handmaid of the Papacy.

## CHAPTER II

### NAPLES (1300-1400)

(See Tables II and III)

THE greater part of the Trecento was covered by the long reigns of King Robert of Naples and his granddaughter, Queen Joanna the First. They have been mentioned frequently in connexion with Rome, but now that for a short time we are to contemplate the century from a Neapolitan point of view it may be well to recall to our minds how this Angevin dynasty established itself at Naples and what its relations were with Sicily.<sup>1</sup>

In *Medieval Italy* I have related how Pope Clement IV invited Charles of Anjou to Italy, and how Charles, who entered Rome in the same month in which Dante was born, was crowned King of the *Regno* (South Italy and Sicily) and made himself master of it after slaying Manfred and executing Conradin. Then in 1282 occurred the tragedy of the Sicilian Vespers and the acquisition of Sicily by Peter III, King of Aragon (in Spain). In the war that followed between the Spanish Peter and the Angevin Charles, the son of the latter, Charles the Lame (*lo Zoppo*), was defeated and captured. He remained a prisoner about five years—being finally liberated at the request of our King Edward I.

Meantime the elder Charles of Anjou had died, and for three years there had been a regency under the prisoner's youthful son, Charles Martel;<sup>2</sup> but in 1289 the liberated

<sup>1</sup> In order to pick up the threads it might be well to turn to *Medieval Italy*, pp. 470-480. To differentiate her from the many Giovannas and Giovannis I have kept the name Joanna, by which this queen is probably known to many readers.

<sup>2</sup> A friend of Dante's, who meets him in Heaven. See *Par.* viii.

## NAPLES (1300-1400)

'Zoppo' assumed the crown as Charles II. He reigned twenty years. He had married Maria of Hungary, and this first-born son of his, Charles Martel, succeeded to the Hungarian throne and became the progenitor of that Ludwig of Hungary and his brother Andreas of whom we shall hear more in connexion with Queen Joanna of evil fame. The second son therefore came to the Neapolitan throne. This second son was Robert of Anjou, who reigned as King of Naples for thirty-four years (1309-43) and was succeeded by his son's daughter, Joanna (1343-82).

Now for Sicily. King Peter, the great enemy of Charles the Elder of Anjou,<sup>1</sup> had three sons. To the eldest, Alfonso, he leaves the crown of Aragon; to the second, James, the crown of Sicily. But Alfonso dies, and James succeeds as King of Aragon; and he makes his younger brother, Frederic, his viceroy in Sicily. Frederic, however, rebels and assumes the kingship of Sicily. Six years later (1302) he signs the treaty of Caltabellotta and marries Leonore, daughter of Charles the Lame of Naples, and promises that on his own death Sicily shall be restored to the Angevins and his heir shall be satisfied with Sardinia or Cyprus. Thus at the beginning of the century that we are here considering there was a truce between the Angevins of Naples and the Aragonese of Sicily, and this truce held fairly during the first twenty-six years of King Robert's reign—namely, until Frederic's death in 1337. But the promise that he had made was not fulfilled, for the Sicilians refused to become again subjects of the French-Neapolitan princes, and made Frederic's son, Peter II, their king. Thus the old feud between the Angevins of Naples and the Spaniards of Sicily broke out again, and during the rest of this 14th century there was intermittent hostility. Joanna made several attempts to conquer the island, which was in a very disturbed state, several of the rulers being mere children or weak-willed, but she renounced the enterprise, and finally (1385) the heiress to the Sicilian throne married the throne-heir of Aragon, and

<sup>1</sup> Dante finds Peter and Charles in Purgatory singing hymns together out of the same hymn-book, so to speak. See *Medieval Italy*, p. xxiv.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

the crown of Sicily thus reverted to the Aragonese (Spanish) kings, one of whom, as we shall see when we reach the next century, made himself (in 1442) master of Naples and founded the Aragonese-Neapolitan dynasty.

Having thus plotted our outline and main lines of perspective, let us try to fill up the sketch with a somewhat free hand ; for to give any complete and exact picture of the political and social state of Naples during the Trecento would be difficult and not very profitable, seeing that its annals are few and obscure and, instead of the dramatic conflicts between republicanism and despotism which make the stories of other cities so deeply interesting, we should have to chronicle the contemptible and often scandalous goings-on at the court of a dissolute queen who reigned for just upon forty years. I shall therefore, after some general remarks, give a few facts, not merely of political but of human and artistic interest, connected with these two very different personalities—King Robert and his granddaughter.

The Byzantine, Saracen, Norman, Teutonic, Angevin, and Spanish dominations in Sicily and South Italy<sup>1</sup> caused these essential parts of Roman (and modern) Italy to have for many centuries a rather loose connexion with what one may call the history of real Italy, and during the period in which we are interested in this volume the state of these two countries was such that the constitutional historian finds very little grist for his mill, seeing that anything worthy of the name of orderly government—not to say self-government—was almost impossible. Ever since Norman and Hohenstaufen times the power of the barons had proved a source of serious disorders, for they did not use their power, as did the barons of England,

<sup>1</sup> The ancient Calabria was the heel of Italy, but in the Middle Ages the name came to denote the Roman Bruttium (the toe of Italy) and Apulia began to be called *Le Puglie* (the Apulias). The old Lombard duchies of Benevento and other parts (formerly Byzantine) of Southern Italy were formed into the Norman duchy of Apulia and Calabria, and when the Norman Roger of Sicily assumed kingship he called himself *Siciliae et Italiae rex*. Then this *Regno* came to be called the 'Two Sicilies,' and the Italian part, held by the Angevins, sometimes went by the name of 'Sicily,' and the Angevins claimed to be kings of 'both the Sicilies.'



## NAPLES (1300-1400)

to wrest a Magna Carta from despotism; the only result of their frequent risings seems to have been that they established themselves as bandit chiefs, with large bands of mercenaries, or sometimes, as in the case of the Sicilian Chiaramonti, even grasped at kingly authority. Thus the *Regno* was continually in a state of revolt and disorder, and these troubles were fomented by the Popes, who were for ever longing to secure the suzerainty of the Sicilies and to encircle their tiara with the double crown.<sup>1</sup> Much disquiet was, moreover, caused by the presence of turbulent Roman nobles, many of whom, when expelled, took up their residence in the Angevin or Aragonese territory and kept ablaze the hostility of the monarchical Neapolitans, the Royalists (*Realisti*), as they were generally called, against the republicans of Rome. Then, later, we have the exceedingly enervating and degrading influence of the luxurious and vicious court of Queen Joanna and the subversion of all public and private morality by the Pope's exculpation and restitution to power of this unprincipled woman, who was certainly an adulteress and probably a murderess.

A natural result of this unhappy state of things was that the development of any great native art was almost impossible. The affluence and luxury of the Angevin court created a demand for such things as pictures and beautiful architecture, but it seems to have been necessary to entice to Naples artists from other parts. Thus the principal Neapolitan churches of this period (originally pure Gothic) were doubtless the work of architects from North Italy or from France,<sup>2</sup> and the principal paintings of this period extant in Naples are by Siennese or Umbrian masters, such as the *Coronation* of Robert

<sup>1</sup> See *Medieval Italy*, pp. x, xxv, 483.

<sup>2</sup> The Duomo, founded by Charles of Anjou, and finished by Robert, is French-Gothic in style. Sta Chiara, founded by Robert, and once adorned by frescos of Giotto, was by a Gothic architect, and contains Robert's magnificent Gothic tomb by Florentine sculptors. S. Lorenzo (where Boccaccio first met Fiammetta), built by Charles of Anjou after Benevento, and the great S. Domenico, built by Charles II, are Gothic, as also S. Maria Nuova, built by Giovanni Pisano (see *Medieval Italy*, pp. 535-536). The great Angevin palace, Castel Nuovo, which still exists, was designed by a French architect (c. 1280).

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

in S. Lorenzo by Simone Martini of Siena and the celebrated frescos in the Incoronata—the chapel built by Joanna to record the coronation of herself and Luigi, the assassin of her husband. And before the time of Joanna the great Giotto himself had been invited to Naples by King Robert (about 1330) and had painted frescos <sup>1</sup> in the Castel Nuovo and the Castello dell' Uovo, which have disappeared, and others in S. Chiara, which are still covered with the coat of paint smeared over them by the orders of a Spanish viceroy of the 17th century. Many Gothic tombs by Tuscan and other sculptors are also to be seen—as the magnificent monument of King Robert in S. Chiara and that of his son Charles, which is by a Sienese artist of about 1333.

And here we may note that also in the Quattrocento (15th century) the same dependence on Tuscan and Umbrian art is observable. We find work by Michelozzo, Donatello, and Benedetto da Maiano, and a great triumphal arch, recording the entry of Alfonso of Aragon in 1442, by a Milanese or Florentine architect (Fig. 23). Then it will be seen that at Naples in later (Spanish) times Roman influence—that of Raphael's school—prevailed until counteracted by the artists of Spain (*e.g.* Ribera) and by northern landscape art—as seen in the case of Salvator Rosa.

But perhaps native Neapolitan art has not received its due. South Italy is often dismissed by writers as having no share whatever in the glory of the revival of art in Italy. This seems at least very questionable, for, even though we may not accept the theories that would make Apulia the *fons et origo* of the new Tuscan sculpture—a point that I have discussed in *Medieval Italy* (pp. 534–536)—it is possible that further research may reveal surprises. One thing at least is certain: those who

<sup>1</sup> King Robert, says Vasari, bade his son Charles, then royal Vicar in Florence, to invite Giotto. Petrarca wrote to a friend, 'Do not fail to visit the chapel of the Castello dell' Uovo where Giotto, the greatest painter of our age, has left such splendid memorials of his genius.' Vasari says that the scenes from the Apocalypse painted by Giotto in 'one of the chapels of S. Chiara,' were said to be 'the invention of Dante.' Whether there is any possibility of bringing these frescos again to light I do not know.

## NAPLES (1300-1400)

opine that South Italy 'had almost no share in the achievements and glory of the Italian Renaissance,' as Mr. Dwight Sedgwick says, seem to forget not only that the Universities of Naples and Salerno, in spite of their medieval *vis inertiae*, must have contributed largely to the opportunities of the humanists, but also that King Robert was regarded by Petrarca himself as a 'king of philosophers and poets' and was without doubt a great lover and patron of learning and art, while Alfonso I was, as we shall see later, one of the most enthusiastic of all Renaissance collectors of Greek manuscripts and kept a large number of scholars and scribes at his court.

Let us now look a little closer at the reigns of Robert and Joanna. Readers of *Medieval Italy* will perhaps remember that Robert of Naples, who as a young man (in 1297) had been wedded to Violante, granddaughter of Manfred, thus uniting the Anjou and Hohenstaufen families, was a great adversary of the Emperor Henry VII (of Luxemburg) and was solemnly deposed and condemned to death *in contumacia* by that *Rex pacificus*. After the death of Henry the Guelfs were naturally in the ascendent, and King Robert was regarded as their leader. He was overwhelmed with gratitude by the Avignon Popes, who (as we have seen in the last chapter) made him, as overlords of the Empire, their 'Imperial Vicar' for Italy as well as Senator of Rome; and Florence put herself under his protection and accepted his son as Signor. But at the advent of Ludwig the Bavarian, invited by the Roman Republic, the Senatorial Vicegerents of the Neapolitan king fled from Rome together with the Colonna and other nobles.<sup>1</sup> Then, at the next swing of the pendulum, we find Robert's Senatorial representatives again at Rome, and when Petrarca, after his rather melodramatic 'examination' by the King at

<sup>1</sup> Guelfs and Ghibellines originally denoted the parties of Pope and of Emperor, the latter of which generally included the nobility, while the Pope was often (nominally) on the side of republican liberty. But here we have the papal party supported by a king and allied with the Roman nobility, while the Roman Republic is for the time at drawn daggers with Pope and king and nobility, and confers the *imperium* on a German monarch. These kaleidoscopic combinations are puzzling.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

the Neapolitan court, proceeded to Rome to receive the laurel crown, he was accompanied by special royal envoys and carried with him a diploma signed by the King as well as the monarch's own mantle, which was to adorn him during the ceremony of coronation. Not long after this, in 1343, King Robert dies.

We have already seen that King Robert was regarded by Petrarca with reverence as a prodigy of learning. The poet's opinion was shared by the historian Giovanni Villani, who was the King's contemporary ; for he first designed his famous *Cronaca* when in Rome (probably with Dante) during the Jubilee of 1300, and he died, doubtless of the Great Plague, in 1348. 'King Robert,' says this chronicler, 'was the wisest monarch in Christendom during 500 years. He was a great master in theology and a consummate philosopher.' The verdict of Dante is less favourable ; but the exiled Dante, although he had been a great friend of Robert's elder brother, Charles Martel, was a sworn foe of the two chief Popes of the early Trecento<sup>1</sup> and was naturally not very friendly to King Robert, the great papal ally ; so it is not surprising that when he describes his meeting with Charles Martel in Paradise he makes his friend speak rather disparagingly of his royal brother, who is accused by him of being 'covetous, though descended from generous ancestors,' and is apparently alluded to in the line

*E fate re di tal che è da sermone,*

the meaning of which is 'Ye make a king of one who ought to be a parson.' Dante only lived to see about a third of King Robert's reign. He might have modified his opinion if he had heard what his friend Giotto had to tell of his Neapolitan experiences. Robert was not a great warrior nor a great politician, but he was not merely a 'man of sermons,' nor a mere bookworm. Besides collecting, transcribing, and trans-

<sup>1</sup> He puts Boniface VIII and Clement V into the same fiery hole in Hell. He had 'made a party for himself,' but his tendencies were, of course, imperialistic and anti-Guelf. The scene with Charles Martel is to be found in *Par.* viii.



## NAPLES (1300-1400)

lating classical and Arabian manuscripts, and besides providing the University of Naples<sup>1</sup> with distinguished teachers at an epoch when the Università della Sapienza at Rome had practically ceased to exist, he was a generous patron, and evidently a very competent judge, of literature and art. Among the churches that he built is that S. Chiara which I have already mentioned—the Pantheon, or Sta Croce, so to speak, of Naples. Here he is to be seen, sculptured in marble, amidst a splendid Gothic monument, lying full length, robed as a Franciscan monk but bearing on his head the kingly crown—fit emblems of his various activities.

Robert's only son, Charles of Calabria, seemingly a valiant and promising youth, who had held for a short time the Signoria of Florence as his father's Vicar, died early (1328) and left as heiress to the Neapolitan crown his daughter Giovanna (Joanna), who shortly after her father's death, in her seventeenth year, had been given in marriage to her relative, Andreas of Hungary, in order to prevent his brother Ludwig, the Hungarian king, pressing his claim to the throne of Naples.<sup>2</sup> Queen Joanna was of a type very different from that of her grandfather. What the Neapolitan court was like before and during her reign of nigh forty years (1343-82) may be gathered not only from the facts recorded by history but also from the pictures given us by Boccaccio and from the tone of the works that he produced under the influence of this court life, such as the *Decameron*, which is said to have been begun at Joanna's command.<sup>3</sup>

Andreas, the youthful consort given to the girl-princess, did not possess her love, and he chafed at being curbed in his extravagances. When he was denied the royal title on Joanna's accession, coldness and discord led to hatred, and when, after two years,

<sup>1</sup> Founded by the Emperor Frederick II. Its professor of philosophy about 1270 had been Thomas Aquinas.

<sup>2</sup> See Table II.

<sup>3</sup> See section on Boccaccio, Part I, Chap. VI. *Fiammetta* deals with the period when he was at Naples as a young man (c. 1333-1340). Joanna was three years his junior. He seems to have returned about 1344 and to have come again under her influence just after her accession. He was not at Naples in 1340-1341 when Petrarca visited it.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

he was assassinated—dragged out of his bedroom, strangled, and hanged from a balcony—at Aversa, whither he had gone to hunt, it was taken for granted (as is stated on his tomb in the Duomo) that Joanna was privy to the murder; and this supposition was confirmed by the fact that one of the assassins, Luigi, Duke of Taranto, was not only her cousin and her heir but also her paramour. This shameless crime naturally incited the King of Hungary, Ludwig, to descend into Italy with an army in order to avenge his brother. Thereupon Joanna fled—followed by her lover—to Avignon. Here by her cajoleries and by a great bribe—namely the sale of Avignon to Pope Clement VI for the nominal sum of 80,000 golden florins—she obtained absolution from the charge of murder, and her union with her fellow-sinner was blessed by the Church. Meanwhile the Hungarian king had entered Naples.<sup>1</sup> But troubles at home and the terrific plague that was then (1348) raging in Italy induced him to hasten back to his northern dominions, choosing the route by the Adriatic and Dalmatia.

Joanna and her new husband then returned from Avignon, and reinstated themselves with the help of the rich Florentine Niccolò Acciaiuoli, who became her Grand Seneschal.<sup>2</sup> Ludwig, however, came back from Hungary, and it was not till 1352 that, after much fighting, he was bought off by a bribe of 300,000 gold florins—which, by the by, Joanna never paid. She and Luigi were then crowned by the papal legate—an event which the name of the Incoronata church commemorates. For ten years this disreputable couple presided over a court of which whatever annals may exist would perhaps scarcely reward the toil of the *chiffonnier*. The most important political occurrence was probably the attempt, already mentioned, that Joanna made to conquer Sicily. She succeeded only so far that the boy-king Frederic II declared himself a vassal of

<sup>1</sup> It will be remembered that Cola di Rienzo fled to Naples, or Neapolitan territory, while Ludwig was there in 1348.

<sup>2</sup> Founder of the Certosa, near Florence, where his tomb is to be seen. The family produced Florentine bishops and other celebrities, on one of whom (father of the Seneschal?) Dante has conferred an immortality of infamy as a swindler who tore out the leaf of a public ledger (*Purg.* xii, 105).

## NAPLES (1300-1400)

the Angevins, promising to call himself King of Trinacria instead of King of Sicily; but the promise was never fulfilled. In 1362 Luigi died, and Joanna incontinently married a third husband, namely James of Aragon, son of the 'King of the Balearic Islands.' A third time, by natural or unnatural agency, she was left a widow, and in her 60th year she became for the fourth time a bride (1376). The bridegroom on this occasion was a certain Otto of Brunswick, Governor of Monteferrato. This fourth marriage led to her downfall and death—a consummation due to the following rather complicated causes.

She was childless, her only child, born during her first marriage, having died in infancy. As her heir, after the death of James of Aragon, she had adopted Charles of Durazzo, who was nephew of Ludwig of Hungary and had married one of her nieces.<sup>1</sup> Now Charles, when he heard of this fourth marriage of Joanna, which annulled his rights, was naturally angered; and his anger was redoubled when he heard that the Queen had actually adopted as heir in his stead a French prince—Louis, Duke of Anjou. And his wrath was further intensified by the fact that the Schismatic Pope,<sup>2</sup> the so-called Clement VII, who in fear of his legitimate Roman rival, Urban VI, had taken refuge in Naples and thence had fled to Avignon, was audaciously bolstering up this French claimant. His determination to revenge himself was, moreover, strengthened by the very zealous support of the legitimate Pope, who declared Joanna to be excommunicated and deposed.

Joanna expected help from France, but just at this crisis the French king died and his brother, Louis of Anjou, delayed his promised advent. Charles of Durazzo was able, therefore, without much trouble to occupy Naples. He besieged the Queen in the Castello dell' Uovo, and after her husband, Otto, had fallen in a gallant attempt at rescue she capitulated.

<sup>1</sup> He had claims to the throne of Hungary. Ludwig, therefore, who wished to secure the Hungarian succession to his own daughter Maria, naturally urged the Neapolitan enterprise.

<sup>2</sup> For this episode see also the chapter on Rome (1378-1379).

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

Unfortunately for her, a strong army under the command of Louis of Anjou and Amedeo of Savoy (an ancestor of the present Italian King) now came on the scene, threatening Charles of Durazzo, who forthwith had her put to death. She was strangled with a silken cord—says Gregorovius—and her body was exposed for a week in the church of Sta Chiara (May 1382). The forces brought by Louis, the French Angevin,<sup>1</sup> were too strong for Charles to oppose in open fight. On the advice of the *condottiere* Alberigo (see p. 60) he adopted a Fabian policy, trusting to his fortresses and to the climate. Nor did he trust in vain, for Louis ere very long died of malarial fever and his army was disbanded. Thus Charles of Durazzo remains master of Naples and the Regno, and it is now that he is visited by the quarrelsome and masterful Pope Urban VI, whose melodramatic experiences have been related in the last chapter. But in 1386 he betakes himself to Hungary in order to deprive another queen of her crown, namely Maria, his cousin, who has succeeded her father Ludwig. This time, however, he fails, for he is assassinated (February 1386).

We now come to his son Ladislaus. He reigned twenty-eight years in Naples; but, as he was a child when his father was assassinated, he was for some years under a regency, and continual disorders were caused by the rivalry of the Neapolitan Angevins and the Durazzo party. In 1389 the fierce old Urban VI died at Rome, and his successor, Boniface IX, a vigorous and far-sighted man of thirty, at once made friends with the party in power (rejecting the claims of the French Angevins and the Aragonese) and sent his legate to crown Ladislaus, who was now of age (1400). The young King had much wealth from his mother, the niece of Joanna, and from his wife, the heiress of the Chiaramonti—the Sicilian noble family which had attained almost royal power in Sicily. He was therefore enabled to hire a large force of mercenaries and able *condottieri*, and after driving back across the Alps the

<sup>1</sup> Charles of Durazzo himself belonged to the Neapolitan Angevin family (through Charles Martel), as also did his wife.



## NAPLES (1300-1400)

young French Angevin pretender, Louis the Second, he began to dream of acquiring the lordship of the whole of Italy—an audacious project that was also being attempted in the north by Gian Galeazzo Visconti of Milan. When we come to the story of Naples in the Quattrocento we shall see how far he succeeded in his design.

## CHAPTER III

### MILAN AND THE VISCONTI (1300-1400)

(See Table IV)

THE complete history of a people would consist to a great extent of facts very different from those which are transmitted by historians. More important, of course, than the doings of its arbitrary rulers are the attempts of a people to acquire self-rule and to prove worthy of it. More important, again, than anything political are its religious, artistic, and literary endeavours to express its higher life and to intimate its higher ideals. But without doubt of still greater importance is what constitutes the real soul of a people—that innumerable multitude of human joys and sufferings, of hopes and fears, of longings and despairs, which finds seldom any permanent expression and can be perceived but faintly even by those who live in their midst. Of all this we chroniclers can but pick up here and there a relic from the dust—some shard or carven thing bearing, as it were, the impress of the human soul—or point to where perhaps a faded fresco or a few pathetic words reveal the real inner life of what is called history.

The story of Milan in the 14th century, as far as we know it from the Villani and other old writers, consists almost wholly of the doings of very arbitrary rulers—the Visconti—whose despotism extended over 136 years (1311-1447). The rise of this family has been described in *Medieval Italy*. It was, briefly, on this wise. After the triumph of the republican Lombard cities over Frederick Barbarossa at the battle of Legnano (1176) Milan adopted a curious constitution composed of three bodies politic, each with its own magistrates—the *Credenza di Sant' Ambrogio* representing the popular party,

## MILAN (1300-1400)

the *Molta* the minor nobility, and the *Credenza dei Consoli* the higher nobility. Naturally dissensions arose, and these, as so often happens, led to the election of a dictator. The powerful della Torre family, which was Guelf and republican, was much in favour with the people, and one of these Torriani was chosen. For over twenty years (1250-77) they dominated the city,<sup>1</sup> but their arrogance induced the Milanese Archbishop, Otto Visconti, to place himself at the head of the aristocratic (Ghibelline) party, which finally succeeded in ejecting the Torriani. Otto was given signorial powers. He was followed by his nephew Matteo, who ere long was driven out by the exiles, and for some years Guido Torriani was supreme.

But in 1311, when Henry of Luxemburg was coming to Milan to receive the Iron Crown, he was met at Asti by the outcast Matteo, who, 'clad in poor armour and attended by one companion,' prostrated himself and supplicated restoration to his native city. The Great Pacificator listened graciously to the appeal of the crafty banished Ghibelline,<sup>2</sup> insisting that peace and equality should be established between the rival houses under his own beneficent supremacy. But when a riot took place the *Rex pacificus* lent his German cut-throats to Matteo, who thus succeeded in massacring and almost annihilating his rivals and ejecting most of their partisans.

Matteo was now (1311) made Imperial Vicar of Milan and the permanent Signoria of the Visconti began. He assumed the leadership of the North Italian Ghibellines<sup>3</sup> and made

<sup>1</sup> Several Torriani were made Senators of Rome.

<sup>2</sup> Dino Compagni (if he wrote the *Cronaca*) calls Matteo *savio e astuto più che leale*.

<sup>3</sup> Other prominent Ghibellines of this epoch were Can Grande della Scala of Verona (at whose court Dante was from 1317 to 1320), Uguccone of Pisa, and Castruccio Castracane of Lucca. For these see Index. It is interesting to note that a Pisan Visconti, related to the famous Ugolino, is mentioned by Dante (*Purg.* viii, and *Inf.* xxii), who calls him 'the noble Judge Nino' of Gallura, in Sardinia. He condemned to be hanged that Fra Gomita whom the poet has doomed to the river of pitch. Nino's widow married Galeazzo Visconti (before he became Signor in 1322). Dante speaks of the Visconti hatchment: 'The Viper that leads to battle the Milanese.'

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

himself master of Como, Piacenza, Bergamo, Pavia, Alexandria, and other cities ; but his second son, Marco, attempting to take Genoa, was badly defeated by the great leader of the Guelfs, King Robert of Naples, and he himself was not any too successful in his conflict with the ' Caorsine ' Pope John XXII, by whose influence the Inquisition was induced to launch its curse against him—a bolt that apparently found its billet, for Matteo died soon after (1322).

Matteo's eldest son, Galeazzo, now became Signor. He was ' astute rather than loyal,' like his father, and was at drawn daggers with his brother, the martial Marco. Things went badly. The Guelfs and the papal forces under Pope John's legate took Monza and Piacenza and nearly captured Milan itself. Moreover, Galeazzo quarrelled with other Ghibelline chiefs, Can Grande among them, and the result was that, jealous of his territorial acquisitions, they denounced <sup>1</sup> his ambitions and his questionable negotiations with the Pope to the ' Emperor,' Ludwig the Bavarian—whose much-ridiculed *Römerzug* has been described in a former chapter. Consequently, when (May 1327) the excommunicated Ludwig, after a splendid reception at Milan, had received the Iron Crown from the hands of an excommunicated bishop, he suddenly arrested Galeazzo, his son Azzo, and his two brothers, Luchino and Giovanni, and cast them into pestilential underground dungeons in Monza—dungeons which the Visconti themselves had constructed with such ingenuity that a prisoner could neither stand nor lie at full length. How long these prisoners enjoyed the fiendish device that they had contrived for others is uncertain. Anyhow, they did not suffer the fate of the maker of the bull of Phalaris. Galeazzo seems to have owed his liberation to Castruccio, Duke of Lucca, and to have died at Lucca in 1328. Azzo and his two uncles were probably set free by the people, though we hear that they were also

<sup>1</sup> Evidently at Trento, where the Ghibelline princes and the three Visconti met Ludwig to welcome him to Italy. There was a report that Marco played the informer (*fece da delatore*, says Corio), and that his brother Stefano tried to poison Ludwig and was made to drink the poison.



## MILAN (1300-1400)

'pardoned' by Ludwig when that Germanic Holy Roman Emperor was hurrying through Italy, anxious to reach safety on the far side of the Alps. Azzo, moreover, was invested by Ludwig with the title of Imperial Vicar of Milan, for which honour he undertook to pay 60,000 golden florins. However, he failed to keep his promise and allied himself with Pope John; whereupon Ludwig appeared before Milan with his Germans, but was received with derision and withdrew. The Milanese then by their public Council nominated Azzo to be Signore<sup>1</sup> of the city, and he 'inaugurated the real independence of the Principate by coining money with his own image and his own name' (Bragagnolo). He also enlarged considerably the Milanese dominion by warring successfully against John of Bohemia, as well as against Mastino della Scala of Verona, who had lent aid to a disaffected Visconti.<sup>2</sup>

Azzo died in 1339, while yet a young man. In his reign of some ten years he had adorned Milan with walls, palaces, fountains, churches, and towers—of which the fine octagonal campanile of S. Gottardo is a noteworthy specimen. He also constructed the *Refosso*, a rampart to protect the suburbs. (The picturesque but malodorous inner moat (*Naviglio*), which visitors to Milan will remember close to S. Lorenzo, dates from before the battle of Legnano, but about 1500 was greatly enlarged by Lodovico Sforza.) Azzo seems, moreover, to have attracted to Milan the silk-weavers of Lucca, whose prosperity had been ruined by the continual raids of the brigand-chiefs Uguccone and Castracane.

On Azzo's death his uncles Luchino and Giovanni were made Signori; but as Giovanni was also the Cardinal Archbishop of Milan his brother Luchino seems to have taken in hand the civil government. He extended the domains of Milan considerably, adding to it Novara, Parma, and other cities; but vices and violence made him hated, and a con-

<sup>1</sup> His most dangerous rival, his martial uncle, Marco, had come to an end in 1329 by falling—or being thrown—from a balcony.

<sup>2</sup> This kinsman, Lodrisio Visconti, was finally captured by Azzo at Parabiago. The 'raid' of John of Bohemia (afterwards killed at the battle of Crécy) is related elsewhere.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

spiracy was hatched by his two nephews, Matteo and Galeazzo, sons of that Stefano who had (it is said) tried to poison Ludwig the Bavarian. The plot, however, was revealed and the young men fled.<sup>1</sup> In 1349 Luchino died suddenly—poisoned, it is believed, by his wife, whom he seems to have threatened to burn for her infidelities, muttering that he would ‘light a fine fire and do such an act of justice as had never before been known in Milan.’

Archbishop Giovanni, who now succeeded his brother as autocrat of Milan (1349–1354), had won respect as a man of humane and gentle nature; but he soon earned also a name for astuteness and determination, for he secretly purchased the Signoria of Bologna from one of the Pepoli,<sup>2</sup> and when Clement VI demanded its restoration to the Holy See and forbade temporal power to be exercised by an archbishop (!), he is said to have given a dramatic answer by appearing before the papal legate in the cathedral (the old basilica) holding in one hand the Cross and in the other a sword. And when the Pope summoned him to Avignon his answer was even more dramatic. He accepted the summons and ordered food and quarters in Avignon for the 18,000 men of his armed retinue; whereupon Clement graciously withdrew the summons.

Giovanni’s humanity, in two senses of the word, has received a testimonial from the fact that Petrarca, when leaving Provence for ever, not only visited the Milanese court, but, much to the annoyance of his republican friends, such as Boccaccio, made Milan his home for a time. The value of this testimonial is, however, rendered very questionable by Petrarca’s total incompetence as a judge of character, or of political morality. It is more likely that creature comforts and adulation—perhaps also a wish to avoid the plague—determined the poet’s choice. But there are other and better certificates of the Archbishop’s

<sup>1</sup> One of the conspirators, Fr. della Pusterla, was executed together with his beautiful wife, who is said to have refused Luchino’s proposals.

<sup>2</sup> As related in connexion with Cardinal Albornoz and Pope Innocent VI, the possession of Bologna was for a long time hotly disputed by the Popes and the Visconti, while the Pepoli family also claimed its Signoria.

## MILAN (1300-1400)

character, one of which is that he liberated the poor Lodrisio, who had pined for ten years in a dungeon. He also forgave and recalled the sons of Stefano and made them, together with their brother Bernabò, his heirs.

His success at Bologna was followed, in the last year of his reign, by a still greater triumph. Genoa, which in its long struggle for sea-supremacy had defeated the Pisans at Meloria (1284) and the Venetians at Curzola (1298) and again on the Bosphorus in 1352, had now suffered such a crushing reverse off Loiera (Sardinia) that it surrendered itself to Milan, which, having thus become for the first time in its existence a naval power, gave such effectual aid that in the next year the whole of the Venetian fleet was sunk or captured off the Morea. (It was in connexion with this conflict with Venice that Petrarca was sent thither by the Archbishop as an envoy—in which mission the poet seems to have failed.) Against Florence, which had leagued itself with Rome, Naples, the Pope and Charles IV, in order to oppose the ambitious projects of the Visconti, the undertakings of Giovanni were less successful—and fortunately so, for it was a most kindly fate that saved Italy from what was becoming a very real peril, namely unification under Milanese despotism. Less fraught with danger, or we might even say more full of promise, was the conception of Cola di Rienzo—before it was ruined by his insane ambitions—of a federated Italy under the leadership of republican Rome; and it is interesting to remember that during the last years of Giovanni Visconti in Milan the final scenes of the drama of the revived Tribuneship were being enacted in Rome, and that both these audacious schemers died in the same year, namely 1354.

Giovanni's three nephews, Matteo II, Galeazzo II, and Bernabò, divided the realm, taking respectively the eastern, the central, and the western regions. Division entailed weakness and soon resulted in the loss of Genoa and Bologna, while Venice (though just then disturbed by Marino Faliero's conspiracy) joined with the Gonzaga of Mantua and the Estensi of Ferrara in attacking Milanese territory with the help of

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

the foreign *banda* of Count Landau.<sup>1</sup> Pavia too was incited to gain its liberty by a republican friar, Bussolari—who reminds one of Savonarola—but in 1359 the city was taken by Galeazzo and treated unmercifully.<sup>2</sup>

Some years before this the eldest of the trio had died, perhaps poisoned by his brothers, Galeazzo and Bernabò, who thereupon divided between them the realm, and even Milan itself. This dual rule lasted over twenty years, until 1378, when Galeazzo died. Chroniclers relate stories that throw a lurid light on the abominable characters of these two princes. It will suffice to reproduce the following.

A device of theirs still more fiendishly ingenious than the Monza dungeons was what went by the name *Quaresima*, the ordinary term for the forty days of Lent. On each succeeding day was inflicted on a condemned victim a more and more grievous torture, such as flaying the soles of one foot, then of the other—then gouging out the eyes one after the other—then cutting off the hands and feet successively—then excising the tongue—and so on, until the 40th day, when the poor mutilated trunk, if still alive, was broken on the wheel. Another atrocious form of punishment, and pastime, practised also later by Giov. Maria, was casting victims to be torn to pieces by ferocious dogs. Bernabò kept, it is said, 5000 of these brutes, and condemned to death or torture any one who poached on his hunting preserves. He was a bitter enemy of Innocent VI and his emissary Albornozy, and once having met the papal envoys—Benedictine abbots—on a bridge, he asked them if they preferred to eat or drink. Glancing down at the turgid stream, they answered that eating seemed preferable; whereupon they were forced to swallow the papal parchment documents, seals and all. A chronicler asserts

<sup>1</sup> For these *Compagnie di ventura*, or *Bande*, see p. 17. On the side of the Visconti was at this time Sir John Hawkwood and his English 'White Company.' Bernabò bribed him by giving him his daughter, Donnina. Charles IV, who (as we have seen) had come down into Italy nominally in order to oppose the ambitions of the Visconti, was won over by the bribes of the three brothers, and came to Milan to receive the Iron Crown (1355).

<sup>2</sup> Petrarca disgraced himself by abetting Galeazzo on this occasion—and then, *per ammenda*, induced him to refound the University of Pavia!



## MILAN (1300-1400)

that a gravedigger who had asked too big a fee was by Bernabò's command buried alive in the grave he had dug, together with the dead body, and that two monks who remonstrated on this occasion were burnt alive.<sup>1</sup>

Tyrants have the habit of constructing strongholds. Galeazzo, after extinguishing in blood the republican conflagration in Pavia, built there not only the new University but the Castello Mirabello (still extant), in the hunting park attached to which was fought a great part of the momentous battle of Pavia (1525). He also constructed in the western part of Milan (which part belonged to him) the Castello di Porta Giovia, the original of the enormous 'Sforza Castle,' in which to-day various museums and galleries are housed.

Galeazzo II died in 1378—the year in which the Great Schism broke out. His son, Gian Galeazzo, succeeded to his domains, sharing for the next seven years the city and territories of Milan with his brutal uncle Bernabò, whose daughter he married, and who regarded him with contempt as a studious, pious, and unenterprising youth.<sup>2</sup>

But Bernabò was dolefully mistaken. Gian Galeazzo was a veritable Viscontean viper.<sup>3</sup> For seven years he dissembled ;

<sup>1</sup> Sacchetti in one of his *Trecento Novelle* (written probably shortly after Bernabò's death) gives an amusing story of Bernabò and an abbot, from which our ballad *King John and the Abbot* is evidently taken. When the abbot is commanded to reveal what is going on in Hell, the clever miller who personates him says, 'I've had a talk with some one who has been there and who supplied Dante with all that he wrote about the Inferno, and I can tell you that they are tearing and cutting people in pieces and hanging them just exactly as you are doing on earth. If you don't believe me, send—or go yourself—and see!' The clever miller is forgiven and is made abbot in place of his dull-witted friend.

<sup>2</sup> Gian's first wife had been Isabelle (Valois), daughter of John II of France, who brought him the title of Count of Vertu (whence he was scornfully called *il Conte delle Virtù*). Galeazzo paid 50,000 gold florins to secure this bride for his son. He also gave a huge dowry to his daughter, Violante, when she married Lionel, Duke of Clarence, son of our Edward III. At the magnificent wedding (at which 2000 English were present) Petrarca held a place of honour ; and we hear that Galeazzo wore a crown of roses on his flaxen hair—the handsomest man in Italy ! By the way, Bernabò had fifteen legitimate and 'a score or so' of illegitimate children.

<sup>3</sup> The Viper of the Visconti (already mentioned) is to be seen on many sculptured tombs, etc. Gian has several rival claimants to the honour of

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

then he suddenly struck. He sent word to his uncle that he intended making a pilgrimage from Pavia, where he generally resided, to the Madonna del Monte,<sup>1</sup> some two hours north of Varese, and that he would halt at his own Milanese Castello di Porta Giovia before continuing his journey northwards. Bernabò sent two of his sons to welcome Gian, and he himself with a couple of followers rode forth later and met him not far from S. Ambrogio; whereupon he was surrounded by his nephew's numerous mercenaries (led by the notorious Jacopo dal Verme); and after a brief struggle both he and his sons were arrested and taken to Gian's Giovian castle, which was close by. He was then transported to the castle of Trezzo, on a bend of the Adda to the east of Monza, where amid the ruins one is still shown what is said to have been the room in which he was imprisoned until, seven months after his capture, he died—probably poisoned (1385).

The Milanese populace, glad to be free from the brutality of Bernabò, sacked and razed his palaces, but they had scarcely more luck with Gian Galeazzo, who was now the sole ruler of Milan and the Milanese domains. He was himself no soldier, but he had rare discernment of character and a gift, such as Narses possessed, of attaching fighters to his service, and he used them so craftily, unscrupulously, and successfully to forward his ambitious designs that he was popularly believed to be in league with the devil. Perhaps his large adoption of 'villainous saltpetre' strengthened this belief and increased his chances of success. As examples of his cold-blooded cunning and brutality—qualities with which even in common parlance his name is still associated—are cited numerous acts such as the following. A quarrel having arisen between the Della Scala of Verona and the Carrara family of Padua, he first took the side of the Paduans, and with their help sacked Verona, slaughtered the inhabitants, being the viper *par excellence*. The hatchment dates from before the time of Matteo I. See *Purg.* viii, 80.

<sup>1</sup> Still frequented by pilgrims. The church, on a height of nearly 3000 feet overlooking parts of L. Maggiore and Como, contains an ancient relief of the Madonna dating from about 1200.

## MILAN (1300-1400)

and put an end to the dynasty of the Scaligeri; then he turned against his allies and made himself master of Padua.<sup>1</sup> It is also said that Iago-like he so excited the jealousy of Francesco Gonzaga of Mantua that he killed his own wife, and then he accused him of murder. Another shameful act of his was to induce Jacopo Appiano, Judas-like, with 'a kiss of peace,' to compass the death of his friend and protector Gambacorta, lord of Pisa, and to seize the signory of that city—and then he bought the signory from the murderer.

Against Florence, then in alliance with Venice, his undertakings were for a long time only partially successful, although his great *condottiere* Dal Verme worsted and nearly captured Sir John Hawkwood, who at this time was in the service of the Florentines. In almost every other direction his arms were victorious, and his ambitious designs were greatly encouraged by the success of his attempt to bribe the so-called Emperor, Wenzel or Wenceslaus, who for 100,000 golden florins conferred on him the ducal title—a title borne henceforth by the Visconti and the Sforza despots—and by the marriage of his daughter Valentina to Louis Duke of Orleans,<sup>2</sup> brother to the French king. But with such successes he seems not to have been satisfied. It is stated that at his villa at Marignano he kept in readiness for kingly coronation a diadem and sceptre; and it is not impossible that, had he lived a few years longer, he might have realized his ambition of founding a *regno* composed of Lombardy and Tuscany, and perhaps Romagna; for before his death—which occurred suddenly in 1402, perhaps caused by the plague<sup>3</sup>—his duchy comprised a great deal of North and Central Italy, including such important towns as Alexandria, Verona, Parma, Como, Bologna, Pisa, Siena, and Perugia; and he was preparing to crown his triumphs by the conquest of Florence, which was awaiting his assault with the courage of despair.

<sup>1</sup> Retaken three years later (1390) by the younger Francesco Carrara, who entered it by the dry bed of the Bacchiglione.

<sup>2</sup> From whom was derived the Orleans branch of kings. The magnificent coronation of Gian Galeazzo as Duke took place in the piazza of S. Ambrogio.

<sup>3</sup> He had withdrawn to Marignano (now Melegnano) to avoid the plague.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

And yet there were some amongst the Florentines who, outwearied by endless wars and woes, rested their only hope, as Dante and as perhaps also Petrarca had done, on the coming of some Leader and Liberator, who should unite all Italy under 'one sole king.' We need not perhaps believe that Fazio degli Uberti, who wrote the following verses about this time, actually yearned to see Gian Galeazzo enthroned king of his native land and city, but his words show clearly that the old Ghibelline spirit of Dante's *De Monarchia* was not yet quite extinct even among the Florentines.<sup>1</sup>

*O figliuol mio, da quanta crudel guerra  
Tutti insiem verremo a dolce pace,  
Se Italia soggiace  
A un solo re.*

To the wealth and the pomp-loving character of Gian Galeazzo we owe the foundation of two magnificent buildings, Milan Cathedral and the Certosa of Pavia, which are described elsewhere (Chapter VII). Here it will suffice to note that he dedicated the former, as an inscription on the façade tells us, to 'Mary the Babe' (*Mariae Nascenti*), in gratitude to whom for granting him heirs by the daughter of Bernabò (whom he had so treacherously captured and had probably poisoned) he gave both his sons the name 'Maria.' He was buried with great pomp in Milan, but later a magnificent monument was erected in the Certosa near Pavia.

The Visconti ruled Milan for nearly fifty years longer, but we must here break off, for we are at the end of the Trecento.

<sup>1</sup> Probably he wrote them in exile. For the famous Ghibelline family of the Uberti see *Medieval Italy*, pp. 432, 470.



## CHAPTER IV

### FLORENCE (1300-1400)

THE story of Florence from its origins down to about 1300 has been already briefly related in *Medieval Italy*, but before I attempt to deal with the tangled web of its political history during the Trecento it may be well to make a few general observations and to pick up a few threads.

Although the abstract question how far movement and differentiation are necessary for vital evolution would lead us too far afield, we may note the fact that the development of the Florentine Commune, which was by far the most organic and persistent of the Italian republics, was accompanied not only by interminable and bloody feuds, but by a continuous series of the most multitudinous and varied political changes, some of them apparently superficial, but many constitutional and, so to speak, molecular.

And in regard to the question whether any attempt to record even a part of the almost innumerable kaleidoscopic phases of the Republic's evolution can be of any profit to any one, I shall content myself with citing what two very great Italians, Dante and Machiavelli, have said, from their different points of view, about the number and the nature of Florentine feuds and changes.

In the midst of his description of the touching meeting of Sordello with his fellow-Mantuan, Virgil, Dante breaks off to address Florence with words of the bitterest sarcasm. 'Thy people,' he exclaims, 'has justice on the very tip of the tongue. Many others refuse to bear the common burden, but thy people readily answereth without being asked, and crieth out

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

*I'll undertake it!* Now be thou joyful, for thou hast good cause! . . . Athens and Sparta, which made the ancient laws and were so civilized, showed but little sign of progress towards good living compared with thee, who makest such fine-spun provisions that unto mid-November lasteth not what thou spinnest in October. . . .'

*Quante volte del tempo che rimembre  
Legge, moneta, officio, e costume  
Hai tu mutato, e rinnovato membre !  
E se ben ti ricordi e vedi lume,  
Vedrai te simigliante a quella inferma  
Che non può trovar posa in su le piume  
Ma con dar volta suo dolore scherma.<sup>1</sup>*

What Machiavelli says in the *Proemio* to his *Istorie Fiorentine* (written two centuries after Dante's Poem) lies on a very different plane, and contains a different moral. Being a politician and political theorist—and he is little else—he naturally complains of writers who are 'very diligent in describing wars with foreign princes and peoples, but either ignore entirely civil discords and internal conflicts, or else relate them so briefly that it is of no profit or pleasure to the reader.' He opines that nothing can be more useful, as a warning, than a full record and full explanation of civil dissensions, especially those of one's own country; and he asserts, rightly enough, that the feuds and party strife of the Florentines 'are more notable than those of any other Italian republic; for most of the other republics have been content with one civil feud, by means of which they have sometimes aggrandized and sometimes ruined their city; but Florence, not content with one, has had many.'

In Athens and Rome, he says, the one great conflict was between patricians and plebeians, but in Florence there were divisions also among the nobles and among the people, inter-

<sup>1</sup> 'How often within the time that thou rememberest hast thou changed law, money, office, and custom, and hast renewed thy members! And if thou mind thee well and look upon the light (art not wilfully blind) thou wilt see thyself like that sick woman who cannot find repose upon her feather bed, but with turning to and fro wards off her pain' (*Purg.* vi).

## FLORENCE (1300-1400)

minable strife under many diverse combinations between the old aristocracy, the new plutocrats, the rich employers, the sweated working class, the clerics, the imperialists, the Blacks and the Whites, the Donati and the Cerchi, the Guelfs and Ghibellines of every shade ; and whenever one party rose to power it not only slew or banished great numbers of its rivals, but was itself apt to split (like some fissile protozoic creature) into several mutually exterminating factions and to become powerless to resist the attacks of internal and of *fuorusciti* foes. In spite of his predilections as constitutional historian Machiavelli is forced to end with a sigh. 'Without doubt,' he says, 'if Florence, when once freed from the Empire, had had so great good fortune as to adopt some form of government that would have kept her united, I know not what republic in ancient or modern times would have outrivalled her.'

While reading this it may occur to us to ask what form of government Machiavelli was thinking of. We may remember that he underwent varied, and at times doleful, experiences of the mutability of *la bellissima figlia di Roma, Fiorenza*, as Dante calls his fickle native city, and that although for fourteen years he was (like Milton) a Secretary to the Commonwealth, and although he was ill-treated, and even tortured, after the Restoration, nevertheless he finally thought it best to acquiesce in the revived Medicean despotism. We may therefore fancy that we can recognize in his sigh for unity an echo of the yearning cry for *un solo re* that a century before had been uttered by the Ghibelline Florentine poet, Fazio degli Uberti. But, in spite of *Il Principe* (which notorious tractate we shall consider on another occasion), Machiavelli seems to me to have remained at heart republican ; and I think this is evident from the fact that, though he may have sighed for unity, he still (in 1525) wrote enthusiastically about republics and regarded these interminable political dissensions of the Florentine Republic as a blessing in disguise. 'In my opinion,' he says, 'no stronger proof of the potency of our city can be given than that afforded by these dissensions. They could

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

have annihilated the greatest and most powerful state, but ours appeared to grow therefrom ever stronger.'

Whether or not we accept Machiavelli's opinion as to the importance of political details, it must be allowed that the story of a people fighting its way towards republican liberty ought, in spite of much that wearies the memory, to be more interesting than the story of an arbitrary ruler or a would-be world-conqueror.

Let us now pick up our threads. What concerns us here is not the early history of Florence, but the history of the Florentine Republic. The first ground-plan of the Commonwealth may be said to have been marked out soon after the publication, in 1115, of the momentous Legacy of Countess Matilda.<sup>1</sup> Ten years later, after the cruel demolition of the rival stronghold of Fiesole, the foundations of the new state were laid on an extended plan, and it proved with its new patriotism and new walls, and in spite of its pitiable internal feuds, strong enough to escape any permanent subjugation by Germanic Caesars or Florentine Ghibellines.

On the death, in 1250, of Frederick II, supported by whom the Ghibellines had secured a temporary triumph, the republican exiles returned and reconstituted the Republic on a more purely democratic basis. In this constitution, known as the *Primo Popolo* (First Democracy), the people were fairly organized and represented, its chief magistrate, who was somewhat like the *Tribunus plebis* of ancient Rome, being called the Capitano del Popolo, while at the head of the nobles and the Commune<sup>2</sup> was the Podestà. The death of the great

<sup>1</sup> But certain declarations of war and other political acts, says Villari (*I primi due Secoli*, ii, 2), seem to indicate *una vera e propria autonomia* even before 1115. After 1125 the constitution, with its Senate and its popular assembly (*Arengo*), began to delineate itself as double, the *Consoli* representing the nobles (the *Grandi* with their *Società delle Torri*—their clubs of castle-lords) and the *Arti*, or Guilds, representing the mercantile commoners; and as the greatness of Florence depended on her commercial prosperity, it was natural that the *Arti* should in time prevail, and that finally labour (represented by the later *Arti minori*) should, as ever, rise against capital, and by its victory smooth the way for despotism.

<sup>2</sup> It is important to remember that the Republic was now divided into two



## FLORENCE (1300-1400)

Ghibelline tyrant of North Italy, Ezzelino, further strengthened the Guelfs (republicans) of Florence, enabling them to expel their rivals. But in 1260 the exiles, powerfully aided by Siena and by Manfred's German cavalry, inflicted such a crushing defeat on the Florentine republicans at Montaperti that Florence was near being razed to the ground and for a season was in the power of the Ghibellines, the red lily giving place to the white.

Then, six and eight years later (1266 and 1268) took place the battles of Benevento and Tagliacozzo, which ended the Hohenstaufen dynasty and for a time ruined the Ghibelline cause—liberating Italy from Germanic, but imposing on her Angevin, influence. These events led to the re-establishment of the Republic, after one desperate rising of the Ghibellines and Germans, on a still more solid foundation. This re-established constitution, known as the *Secondo Popolo*, held sway during the Trecento (the age of Dante and Petrarca and Boccaccio and Giotto) and became more and more democratic, until, as so often happened in ancient Greece, and as usually happens in an absolute democracy, the jealousies and passions of party strife for political ascendancy facilitated the advent of the despot. It is the story of Florence under the rule of this Second Democracy which will now occupy our attention; but we should remember that its real history consists in something much more interesting and important than the dry details of its political evolution.<sup>1</sup>

distinct parts, the People and the Commune, each with its chief magistrate. But there was also a central Government, represented by twelve *Anziani di popolo*. These Anziani correspond somewhat to the old Roman Consuls, while the Capitano corresponds to the ancient Tribune, and the Podestà to the Praetor. See Villari, *I pr. d. Sec.* iv, 3 (followed closely by Gardner).

<sup>1</sup> The complicated machinery of the *Secondo Popolo* consisted at first in the Anziani, the Podestà, the Capitano, each with *two* councils, and the seven *Arti maggiori* (Greater Guilds), all with their own councils and with consuls who also sat in the chief councils of the State. Overshadowing all this was, for some considerable period, the suzerainty of Charles of Anjou, to whom, as he was leader of the Guelf cause, the Florentines, somewhat strangely, submitted themselves voluntarily. An element that should be mentioned is the so-called *Parte Guelfa*. It was originally a committee composed of three Grandi and three Popolani to dispense the property of the exiled Ghibellines,

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

In the year 1282—notable for the ‘*Sicilian Vespers*’—a democratic measure was passed which, as Villari says, ‘made Florence into a republic of merchants.’ The government was given over practically to the control of the Greater Guilds, from whose presidents (*Consules priores*, now generally called *Priori*) was chosen every two months the Signoria, or supreme magistracy of the State.<sup>1</sup> ‘All this,’ says Villari, ‘created a new social order. The citizens were now divided into *popolo grasso* (fat) and *popolo magro* or *minuto*; and the richer merchants of the *Arti* formed a new aristocracy, which was very hostile to the Ghibellines.’

In 1284 the destruction of the Pisan fleet by the Genoese at Meloria (an islet off Livorno) excited immense exultation at Florence and gave great impetus to its commerce; for the want of an outlet to the sea had always been an obstacle to its prosperity and had caused bitter rivalry and constant warfare with the Pisans.

In 1289 the exiled Ghibellines made a vain effort, the last of any importance, to enter their native city by force of arms. Supported by the people of Arezzo, which was allied with Pisa, they risked a battle near Campaldino (in the Casentino, east of Vallombrosa) and were defeated with immense loss.<sup>2</sup>

but it remained as a dangerous unconstitutional organization (with its councils and capitani) under the protection of Popes and Angevins. Its professed activity was smelling out Ghibelline treason, but it played a leading rôle in revolutionary disorders, such as the Ciompi riot. Its places of meeting were the church of S. Biagio and the adjacent Palazzo della Parte Guelfa, of which portions remain, near the Mercato Nuovo. Its flag (an eagle and a dragon) was that given by the Pope to the Florentines who fought at Benevento.

<sup>1</sup> They took the place of the Fourteen (*Quattordici*) who a few years before had been substituted for the Anziani. The original Arte was that of the Merchants or of Foreign Cloth (*Calimala*). It dated from about 1100. There were now seven, viz. *di Calimala, della Lana, dei Cambiatori, dei Medici e Speziali* (doctors and chemists—and also booksellers; Dante’s Guild), *della Seta, dei Pelliciaï* (Furriers), *dei Guidici e Notaï*. At first only one Prior from each of the three first-named *Arti* was chosen. Later there were six, the Guild of Judges and Lawyers being omitted; but this Guild, in compensation, retained jurisdiction over all the others.

<sup>2</sup> ‘It is said to have been almost the last Italian battle in which burgher forces and not the mercenary soldiery of the Condottieri carried the day’ (Gardner). Both at Campaldino and, the next year, at the surrender of

## FLORENCE (1300-1400)

These victories and the wonderful development of commerce therefrom resulting extended and confirmed the prestige and power of the Republic, which now began to assume the political hegemony of Central Italy, and that hegemony in art and literature which ere long was to win for Florence a name comparable with that of ancient Athens.<sup>1</sup>

Another great step towards Democracy was taken in 1293. Public sanction was given to the *Ordinamenti di Giustizia*, which were directed specially against the new plutocrats and deprived the nobles of the right of election to the Signoria.<sup>2</sup> There was, moreover, instituted a Gonfaloniere di Giustizia, a new official, associated with the bimonthly Priors, and supported by a civic militia (later of 2000 men) under the command of other Gonfalonieri (standard-bearers). He was empowered to punish recalcitrant magnates (*Grandi*), especially those who committed misdemeanours against the people, by razing their houses, confiscating their property, or even by death. In times of sedition his authority was dictatorial, and in course of time he became the supreme and almost autocratic head of the State during his time of office. This seems scarcely a democratic move; but the office was limited to two months, and all these changes do really seem to have strengthened the power of the *popolo minuto* at the expense of the *Grandi* and the *popolo grasso*, so that the poorest class of the inhabitants (the *plebe*), which was beginning to feel conscious of its growing power, now insisted on its Guilds, or

Caprona (held by Pisans and Ghibellines) Dante was present. See *Inf.* xxi, 94; xxii, 4; and the wonderful passage (*Purg.* v, 91 sq.) describing the fate of Buonconte, who fell at Campaldino. See also map, p. 142.

<sup>1</sup> Italian art and literature during the Trecento are briefly discussed in Chapters VI and VII. Here one may note that between the battle of Campaldino and the beginning of the Trecento we have at Florence the early works of Dante, the poems of Guido Cavalcanti and of others of the *dolce stil nuovo*; in painting we have Cimabue and the earlier works of Giotto; and, as for architecture, Florence was becoming thickly studded with the towers and palaces of the new Guelf aristocracy, and the Palazzo Vecchio, the Duomo, the Third Walls, Santa Croce, the Annunziata, the new Badia, San Marco, and Sta Maria Novella were rising.

<sup>2</sup> Nearly forty 'fat' Guelf families were for this purpose declared noble and incapable of renouncing their nobility!



## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

Trade Unions, being recognized.<sup>1</sup> These *Arti minori*, which included the masters of the more humble crafts and trades, had existed for many years, but they were now organized and enfranchised, and their number was fixed at fourteen.

The chance that Florence now had of developing into a model republic was frustrated by two evils. One was the rapid preponderance of the *nouveaux riches*, the plutocrat Guelf Grandi and the *popolani grassi*, who in 1295 succeeded in banishing the instigator<sup>2</sup> of the *Ordinamenti*, so that, as the old chronicler Villani says, 'the artisans and *popolani minuti* lost again almost all political power, which remained in the hands of the *popolani grassi* and the *potenti*.' Secondly, the existing internal dissensions were greatly aggravated by the introduction from Pistoia—that 'den of noxious beasts,' as Dante calls it—of the Neri-Bianchi feud. The disastrous consequence of this was what Professor Villari calls a period of *vertiginosa confusione*, in the midst of which (in 1302) Dante, together with other Whites or 'disaffected Guelfs,' was banished.<sup>3</sup>

Dante's experiences as party politician, Prior, and exile will be related elsewhere. Here we may note that the bitter sarcasm and scorn which, mingled with a 'poet's love of love,' he poured out on his native city were not unjustified, for during the next twenty years and more Florence was indeed rich, but without peace, without wisdom, and without good guidance.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The names used for the different classes are somewhat variable. There were the old *Magnati* (feudal Ghibelline aristocrats, many of German origin, mostly now banished), and the later *Grandi*, and *Nobili*; then the new bourgeoisie Guelf plutocracy and the *popolo*, which is called *grasso*, *minuto*, *magro*, etc., according to its means; then the *plebe*. Machiavelli (ii, 42) speaks of three classes, the powerful, the middle, and the low, and says that after the ruin of the nobles the conflict was between the *popolo* and the *plebe* (middle and low).

<sup>2</sup> Gian della Bella, who was by birth a noble. He had fought at Campaldino, where his horse had been killed under him. He died in France.

<sup>3</sup> See especially Villari's chapter (in the *Due Secoli*) on 'La Repubblica Fiorentina ai tempi di Dante.' I might also perhaps draw notice to the chapter on 'Florence and the Feuds' in my *Selections from the Inferno* (Oxford, 1874).

<sup>4</sup> *Fiorenza mia*. . . . *Tu ricca, tu con pace, tu con senno*. . . . *La ben guidata*. . . . (*Purg.* vi and xii). In one act, however, she scarcely deserves the sarcasm—namely in her defiance of Henry VII.



## FLORENCE · (1300-1400)

The fierce Corso Donati, leader of the 'Blacks' (who were ultra-Guelfs), had been himself banished during Dante's Priorate, but had returned by force, aided by the French troops of Charles of Valois, and had effected the banishment of the poet, while he was (probably) at Rome.<sup>1</sup>

The state of Florence at this crisis was pitiable. The city was ravaged by the French and the triumphant Neri, and there was open civil war between these 'Blacks' and the more moderate Guelf party of the 'Whites.' To this party Dante himself had belonged before his exile, as had also his great friend Guido Cavalcanti,<sup>2</sup> and one of the atrocities committed at this time (1304) was the burning down by the Neri of a considerable part of the city in order to destroy the property of the Cavalcanti. The following passage translated from Villari (X, iii) will help us to realize the anarchy that prevailed at this time in Florence. The description is taken from Giov. Villani and Dino Compagni, contemporary chroniclers. Machiavelli gives a similar account, and mentions as some of the most prominent ringleaders 'i Medici,' who are also mentioned by Giov. Villani as 'committing greater and more cruel excesses than all others.'

'It was the 10th of June, 1304, and a strong *tramontana* was blowing; the conflagration spread itself therefore rapidly in the Calimala, the Mercato Vecchio, and Orsanmichele, and thus was soon ablaze, together with the houses of the Cavalcanti, all the centre, *all the marrow, the yolk, and the well-beloved places of the city of Florence*, as says Villani.' He adds that, 'what with palaces, houses, and towers, there were destroyed more than 1700 buildings, with infinite loss of merchandise, seeing that also those which were not burnt were pillaged

<sup>1</sup> Charles, who had been invited to Italy by Boniface VIII, entered Florence November 1, 1301, and joined the Neri. He set up as Podestà a certain Cante de' Gabbrielli, of his own retinue, under whose orders the servile 'Black' Signoria passed this measure.

<sup>2</sup> Guido was exiled with the heads of both factions during Dante's Priorate, but he was allowed to return (from Sarzana) on account of serious illness, and he died at Florence in December 1300. Readers of Dante will remember the vivid and touching scene in the *Inferno* between himself and his friend's father (*Inf. x*).

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

while they were being cleared out ; for the men continued to fight and to plunder in the midst of the flames.'

It was in this same year, 1304—the year of Petrarca's birth—that a tragic occurrence took place in Florence. A papal legate had come to plead for peace and the return of the exiles, and a May-day pageant was held, such as for many years had been rendered impossible by political and family feuds. The subject of the torments and raptures of Hell and Heaven was one that in these ages deeply stirred the imagination and found frequent expression in art. At this very time the greatest poet of Italy was engaged in depicting the terrors of the *Inferno*, and it was but natural that the Florentines should choose the same subject for their May-day festival. Boats were furnished with scaffoldings and platforms 'whereon,' says Giov. Villani, 'they represented the similitude of Hell, with its fires and its other torments, and with men dressed up as fiends, terrible to behold, and others like naked souls . . . and they cast them into the various torments amid loud shrieks and cries.' While this was going on, the old wooden Ponte alla Carraia (then called the Ponte Nuovo), which was densely crowded with spectators, suddenly 'broke down in several places,' and many people were killed by the fall, many were drowned, and many grievously wounded. 'So the spectacle was changed from jest to earnest,' says the old chronicler, 'and many did verily depart in death to have experience of the other world.'

Dante had been about seven years in exile—he was perhaps at the moment staying at a monastery near Spezia, 'making a party for himself' and digging that fiery pit in Malebolge in which to plant head-foremost the papal traitor who was deserting Rome for Avignon—when Corso Donati, who had, strangely enough,<sup>1</sup> married a daughter of Dante's friend, the great Ghibelline *condottiere*, Uguccone della Faggiuola, succumbed to her cajoleries and her father's promises, and, furious

<sup>1</sup> Strangely, too, Dante married one of the Donati—possibly a sister of his great adversary Corso. Anyhow, Dante met in Paradise Piccarda, Corso's sister, for whom he evidently had great affection. See *Medieval Italy*, p. 518.



4. DANTE



5. SIR JOHN HAWKWOOD



## FLORENCE (1300-1400)

against his own political rivals,<sup>1</sup> turned traitor and planned to make himself Signor of Florence. But his plot was foiled. On October 6, 1308, suddenly the great bell of the Signoria—the 'Cow' (*Vacca*)—began to bellow. A vast crowd, headed by Corso's enemies, collected and demanded his indictment, and in less than an hour, says Villani (Machiavelli says two hours), a verdict of high treason was passed against him. Forthwith the Signori, the Podestà, the Capitano del Popolo bearing the Gonfalon, with a great company on foot and on horse, hastened to arrest him, and assaulted the palaces of the Donati near S. Piero Maggiore—in the piazzetta of the Little Market, nowadays often so full of life and colour, with its *carretti* of fruit and divers wares. Corso, after waiting in vain for the promised succour, fled eastwards through the Porta di S. Salvi, and having been overtaken near the Vallombrosan Abbey of that saint was slain, and was buried by the monks in their *Badia*. According to Machiavelli and others, having been captured and preferring suicide to torture, he threw himself off his horse and was killed by one of the Catalonian mercenaries.<sup>2</sup> According to Dante (*Purg.* xxiv) he was 'dragged at a beast's tail'—but the passage is difficult to understand.

The descent into Italy of the self-styled Great Pacificator (*Rex pacificus*) Henry of Luxemburg has been mentioned already in this volume, and in a former volume<sup>3</sup> his futile attack on Florence has been described, as well as the enthusiasm of Dante for one whom he regarded as a Deliverer, and whose crown of glory he beheld lying on a still empty throne in Paradise.

The disdain with which Florence and her allies<sup>4</sup> met the

<sup>1</sup> These were Della Tosa, Pazzi, and Brunelleschi—names worth mentioning because of their later fame.

<sup>2</sup> Spaniards in the pay of Charles II (lo Zoppo) of Naples, who seem to have accompanied the Pope's legate to Florence—forerunners of the Neapolitan soldiery of King Robert, whom the Florentines not long afterwards made the lord of their city.

<sup>3</sup> See *Medieval Italy*, pp. 489 *sq.* and the Note on Dante's *Monarchia*, p. 495.

<sup>4</sup> Florence was helped by troops from Lucca, Siena, Bologna, and other Guelf cities.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

attack of Henry was significant. They merely shut the eastern gates that looked towards S. Salvi, where his army was encamped on the flat terrain still called the *Campo d'Arrigo*, close to the Campo di Marte. This disdainful defiance of the once mighty Holy Roman Empire makes us realize how low it had fallen from its high estate, and how strong and self-assured Florentine republicanism had apparently become. It seemed almost as if Florence might now come forward as champion of Italian liberty and unity—as if she might really, to use Professor Villari's expression, 'initiate a truly national policy.' But it was, alas! an illusion. Even before triumphantly announcing to their allies that 'Jesus Christ had caused to die *quello fierissimo tiranno Arrigo*, whom the Ghibelline persecutors of Holy Church called King of the Romans and Imperator,' the Florentines had conferred the Signory of their city for five years on King Robert of Naples. Then, when two years later (1315) the soldier of fortune Uguccone della Faggiuola, whom Henry had made Imperial Vicar of Genoa and whom the Pisans had elected Podestà (supreme constitutional magistrate) of their city, made himself Signor, or Despot, of both Pisa and Lucca and inflicted a crushing defeat on the Florentine army near Montecatini,<sup>1</sup> they realized that, even at the head of various cities which had formed a Guelf league, they had no chance without the aid of the *Reali*, the Royalists of Naples, who at this time, in close alliance with the Pope, were the strongest military power in Italy. Moreover, after the fall of Uguccone, expelled by the people of Pisa and Lucca,<sup>2</sup> a still more redoubtable champion of imperialism and despotism arose—that lord of Lucca, Castruccio Castracane, whose rise to power and whose friendship with Ludwig the Bavarian I have already described in the Historical Outline and in the chapter on Rome. What interests us specially here is that he came into collision with the Florentines, and after capturing

<sup>1</sup> Dante, who was perhaps at this time residing at Lucca with Uguccone, rejected with indignation the terms offered to the exiles after this defeat. See Chap. VI.

<sup>2</sup> Uguccone withdrew to Verona, where he met Dante again. He died there in 1319.

## FLORENCE (1300-1400)

Pistoia met the forces of the Gueff cities (Florence, Siena, Volterra, Bologna, and others, besides Naples) at Altopascio, close to Lucca (September 1325). Castruccio was aided by cavalry sent by Galeazzo I of Milan. The rout of the Gueffs was such that they were chased back to the very walls of Florence, and (says Machiavelli) the Florentines thought themselves lucky to have saved their city.

The depression caused by these defeats induced the Florentines shortly afterwards to offer the Signoria<sup>1</sup> of their city for ten years to Charles, Duke of Calabria, the son of King Robert of Naples; and the offer was accepted. Charles sent a Vicar,<sup>2</sup> as he himself was engaged in the Sicilian war; then, six months later (1326) he entered Florence with a thousand horsemen and soon curbed the insolence of Castruccio; but ere long the Florentines would have been glad to be saved from their friend, for in spite of all conventions, says Machiavelli, he extorted from them huge sums of money.

Ludwig the Bavarian now (1327) descends upon Italy—as has been related in Chapters I and III—and after visiting and imprisoning the four Visconti and helping Castruccio to the Signory of Pisa and the Dukedom of Lucca takes that ‘scourge of Tuscany’ with him on his march to Rome, not daring to attack Florence, strongly reinforced with the Neapolitan troops.

In the next year (1328) Charles of Calabria, who had hastened

<sup>1</sup> Machiavelli tries to palliate this by calling it alliance rather than vassalage, but (ii, 24) he allows that they had originally appealed to King Robert ‘not as friends, but that he might defend them as his vassals [*suoi uomini*].’ It is true that the King promised not to alter the constitution.

<sup>2</sup> This Vicar, who for a few months represented Charles at Florence, was Walter de Brienne, who called himself Duke of Athens. As he will ere long play a conspicuous rôle it will be well to explain at once who he was. When Constantinople was taken by the Latins in the 4th Crusade (1204) and a series of ‘Latin’ Emperors (mostly Flemish, and some English) began to occupy the throne of Justinian, Athens was given over to a follower of the Marquis of Montferrat and came into the power of a French family named de Brienne. These were afterwards expelled, and this Walter de Brienne, a soldier of fortune, still paraded the empty ducal title. The last ‘Duke of Athens’ was one of the Florentine Acciaiuoli. He was strangled (1458) by Mohammed II, the captor of Constantinople.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

southwards to defend his father against the Bavarian, died at Naples. Castruccio, too, who had left the new-crowned 'Emperor' at Rome in order to recover Pistoia, that the Florentines had recaptured, died at Lucca. Thus for a time Florence was liberated both from friends and enemies, and the reaction towards democracy was attended by some constitutional changes. Among these of special importance were the institution of two supreme Councils, that of the Commune (Grandi and Popolani mixed) and that of the People, in lieu of the old assemblies, and the election of the Priors and Gonfalonieri by a method called *imborsazione*, i.e. putting the names of all eligible persons into a bag, which was kept in the cloister of some church until the day of election.

From Castruccio's death, in 1328, down to 1340, says Machiavelli, the Florentines enjoyed respite from internal strife, nor were they involved in wars, though they joined the league that drove John of Bohemia back across the Alps. But they were afflicted by epidemics, scarcity, and by a great inundation of the Arno. This flood (1333) wrought great havoc, but the ruined bridges and buildings were rebuilt with lavish expense. 'They also adorned their city with new buildings, amongst which was the Campanile of Santa Reparata (the Duomo), erected according to the advice of Giotto, a painter at that time very famous.' During this comparatively peaceful period, however, the power and arrogance of the Grandi, especially of the burgher plutocrats, increased greatly and they were for ever intent on defeating republican measures, such as that of the *imborsazione*, by all kinds of ingenious devices, like those that were used at Venice in order to limit elections to a certain number of families. At last, when (1342) the Pisans ejected the Florentine garrison from Lucca,<sup>1</sup> the disgrace so roused the fury of the people against the 'Twenty,' a staff which had been elected to manage the war, that they

<sup>1</sup> After passing through the hands of Ludwig the Emperor and John of Bohemia, Lucca had come into the possession of Mastino della Scala of Verona, who, being in difficulties, sold it to the Florentines; from whom the Pisans very soon filched it (1342).



## FLORENCE (1300-1400)

invited Walter de Brienne (the 'Duke of Athens') to return, and installed him as commandant; and when by the pitiless execution of unpopular citizens and by simulated piety<sup>1</sup> he had gained the favour both of the populace and of many of the Grandi, the Signoria felt compelled to elect him lord of the city for a year. But when the edict was being publicly read from the *ringhiera*—the 'harangue-platform,' above the steps of the Palace of the Signoria<sup>2</sup>—and 'they had come to where it was stated that the lordship was granted him for one year, a shout arose from the crowd, *For life! For life!*'

The new despot at once surrounded himself with armed mercenaries and threw off the mask of piety and humanity. A very dark and horrid picture of the short tyranny of this *dux et dominus Florentinorum*, as he called himself, is given us by Machiavelli (ii, 36). He at once drove the Priors from the Palazzo Vecchio, which, in spite of urgent advice from King Robert of Naples,<sup>3</sup> he inhabited and fortified; he abolished the *Ordinamenti di Giustizia* and burnt them; he dissolved the Arti and forbade citizens to bear arms; he oppressed them with grievous taxes. Then, suddenly, the people rise to the cry, *Viva il Comune e la Libertà!* and besiege him in the Palace. His chief satellite and the man's youthful son were torn to pieces in the Piazza by 'the hands and teeth' of the infuriated mob, and he himself would doubtless have met a similar fate had not there arrived 'six Sienese envoys, men highly honoured in their own country,' on whose urgent appeal the people allowed the tyrant to be conveyed out of the city—across the Rubaconte bridge (*alle Grazie*) to the Casentino, 'where, right loth, he ratified his abdication' (Machiavelli). 'Thus with great disgrace, but

<sup>1</sup> 'Better to prove his piety and humanity he chose for his residence the convent of the Franciscan Minorites of S. Croce' (Machiavelli).

<sup>2</sup> The Ringhiera itself was removed in 1812.

<sup>3</sup> 'Give up,' he wrote, 'the Palace that was built for the people, and reside in the palace of their Podestà [the Bargello], where my son, the Duke of Calabria, resided when he was Signor of Florence, or I think thou wilt not maintain thy state for long' (Giov. Villani).

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

with much money,' says Giov. Villani—who was living in Florence at this crisis—this audacious adventurer passed (July 1343) from the stage where he had lorded it for ten months. He withdrew to France and was slain at the battle of Poitiers in 1356.

The expulsion of the 'Duke of Athens' took place on St. Anne's Day (July 26). It was decreed that the day should be kept ever after as a public holiday, and that before the altar and image of the saint in Orsanmichele the magistrates should every year make thankoffering to the new patroness of the city for liberation from the 'pernicious and tyrannical yoke' of the tyrant.

Machiavelli says: 'The feuds of the nobles and the people ended with the tyranny of the Duke of Athens and the ruin of the nobility, so that now remain to be related the conflicts between the *popolo* and the *plebe*'—roughly speaking, between capital and labour. It seems, however, that he was mistaken in antedating a very serious attempt of the nobles to recapture power. This took place not three years before, but two months *after* the expulsion of the Duke, viz. in September 1343. The leaders of the nobles were the Bardi—one of the oldest of the Florentine banker-families.<sup>1</sup> The fighting was fierce in the centre of the city, round the houses of the Donati and Pazzi (S. Piero Maggiore) and those of the Cavalcanti (Mercato Nuovo), which were stormed by the people led by the *nouveaux riches*, among whom were again foremost the Medici. The nobles then made a desperate stand in the Oltrarno, holding the bridges; but the people forced the Carraia bridge, and the age-long contest was now decided in favour of Democracy. The Grandi surrendered at discretion and were allowed to withdraw to their country castles; but, says Machiavelli, a law was passed that no citizen should possess any castle within 20 miles of Florence, and the

<sup>1</sup> Mentioned by Giov. Villani as powerful about 1200. Simone Bardi married Dante's Beatrice. The name is also familiar to all who know Santa Croce, and the Via de' Bardi, and *Romola*. The Bardi lent great sums to our Edward III.

## FLORENCE (1300-1400)

Government bought up many of these castles, such as that of the Bardi at Vernio (some 17 miles distant).

The victory of the combined *popolani* over the old aristocracy resulted, as ever, in widening the split between the two classes of the *popolani* themselves—between the ‘fat’ and the ‘thin’ burghers—between capital and labour; and, as in the case of many an ancient republic, the discontent of the *demos*, the *plebs*, was exploited by the ambitions of rival plutocrats and ended, as usual, in opening the way for the inevitable despot. But for the next thirty-five years the Republic, patched and buttressed up by various democratic measures,<sup>1</sup> maintained the semblance of internal security and prospered greatly externally, in spite of the devastations of the Great Plague of 1348 (the *Morte Nera* of Boccaccio’s *Decameron*), which carried off 96,000 Florentines—among them Giovanni Villani, the historian.

Between 1347 and 1354 took place the three acts of the Cola di Rienzo melodrama, in which Florence (as we have seen in the chapter on Rome) played a somewhat passive and hesitating rôle, not venturing to throw itself heart and soul into the scheme of the New Roman Republic; but it vigorously prosecuted war against Milan, endeavouring to stem the ambitious designs of the Archbishop-despot, Giovanni Visconti, and it managed to escape trouble in connexion with the ridiculous *Römerzug* of Charles IV by paying him 4000 golden florins for the empty titles of Imperial Vicar that he lavished on Florentine Priors<sup>2</sup> and Gonfalonieri. By such combination of cautelous and audacious policy the Republic consolidated its dominion in Tuscany, tightening its grip on Prato, Pistoia, S. Gimignano, Volterra, and other townships.

Now it will be remembered that when Cola was released from prison at Avignon and allowed to return to Rome (1354), he was accompanied by the emissary of the Pope, the Spanish

<sup>1</sup> Such as an odious class-law, passed in 1358, by which many citizens were warned (*ammoniti*) and made ineligible to office when of Ghibelline descent or suspected of anti-republican proclivities. It adds, however, to the confusion to use the word ‘Ghibelline,’ which long ago had lost its meaning amid the din of a hundred other party-cries.

<sup>2</sup> There were now eight Priors, two taken from the *Arti Minori*.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

Cardinal Albornoz, who during the next six years waged a terrible war, aided by bloodthirsty foreign mercenaries, against the revolted cities and Signors of the so-called Papal States. This atrocious invasion of Italy by the hirelings of the French Popes naturally roused the ire not only of the antipapal party but of all patriots, and Florence, as the champion of republicanism, headed them against the alien papal oppressors, allying itself even with Bernabò of Milan. Between 1370 and 1375, after the futile 'first return' of Pope Urban V (who after three years at Rome had gone back to Avignon and had died there), and while Gregory XI was still refusing obstinately to leave France and was still ravaging the cities of Italy with his hordes of Bretons and English, the Florentines elected eight War Ministers, known by the curious name of 'The Eight Saints of War,' and appealed urgently to Rome to revolt against the 'French papal tyrant and the barbarian invaders'; but, as related in Chapter I, Rome made the great refusal, and Italy thus lost a chance that never again presented itself. Florence vacillated, negotiated, and yielded.

Gregory XI, induced more by the fear of losing his devastated but still rebellious Italian provinces than by the gentle influence of the Florentine envoy, St. Catharine of Siena, transferred in 1377 the papal seat to Rome, and although bloody massacres continued to be perpetrated by the successors of Cardinal Albornoz with their mercenary *condottieri*,<sup>1</sup> the antipapal League of Liberty, which was headed by Florence and had been mainly directed against the Avignon Papacy, now became loosened. The Florentines, who had defied all Gregory's thunderbolts, reopening their churches when he laid the city under Interdict, listen now to the persuasions of the French king and of the Neapolitan queen, Joanna, and at last make peace, just before the death of the Pope and the outbreak of the Great Schism (1378).

The cessation of this war against the Papacy ought to have

<sup>1</sup> For the feats of Sir John Hawkwood (now in papal service), and of the bloodthirsty Cardinal Robert of Geneva (later Antipope), see Index. About 1378 Hawkwood entered the service of Florence.



## FLORENCE (1300-1400)

relieved the high tension of political feuds in Florence, but did not do so. The conflict was now mainly between the new democracy and the older republicanism—that is between the antipapal, governmental, democratic-plutocratic war party, headed by the military cabinet of the 'Eight Saints,' and the old-fashioned Guelph republicans of 1266, once themselves governmental, but now (since the expulsion of the still older Ghibelline nobility) the anti-democratic opposition. These 'old republicans' were headed by the Capitani of the Parte Guelfa—that dangerous, anti-governmental organization which, as already explained, retained the power of accusing and 'warning,' or branding, those whom it suspected of Ghibelline (non-republican) sentiments, and thus making them—the *ammoniti*—incapable of election to public office. This Parte Guelfa, says Machiavelli, abused its powers exceedingly for party purposes, and the Capitani became more feared than the Signoria itself, and behaved most insolently towards it. Besides all this political tension there was the ever fiercer discontent of labour against capital—of the *popolo magro*, the sweated and voteless working class, against their employers, the 'fat' burghers of the Guilds.<sup>1</sup>

The so-called 'Ciompi' riot, that broke out in 1378 and had serious, if not permanent, results, was mainly a rising of labour against capital, but the disorders seem to have been begun by an attack which the Gonfaloniere di Giustizia, Salvestro de' Medici (an ancestor of the Magnifico), made on the arrogant Capitani of the Parte Guelfa. Evidently with the object of rousing the *plebe* for his own purposes (as did his descendants) he proposed that citizens who had been 'warned' and made ineligible should recover their rights, and that the old *Ordinamenti* against magnates should be revived and made applicable to the modern magnates of the Parte Guelfa. These proposals caused immense sensation; and when they were timidly rejected by the Government, Salvestro appealed to the plebiscite of the Arengo.

<sup>1</sup> Even the *Arti Minori* consisted now mainly of well-to-do employers and had Priors in the Government.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

This was the signal for rival families and rival classes to range themselves in battle-array. A bitter quarrel between the Ricci and the Albizzi, two leading families of the plutocracy, had taken the place of the old Cerchi-Donati feud, and now the Ricci sided with Salvestro and with the democratic Eight as patrons of the working class, while the Albizzi held with the Parte Guelfa and the rich employers—the Government (Signoria) standing somewhat aside, being doubtless divided in sentiment.

The passions of the *plebe* were strongly aroused by the appeal to the great Consiglio that alone expressed the *vox populi*. The sweated and voteless working men, the 'Mates' (*Ciompi*) as they were called,<sup>1</sup> attached to the Arte della Lana, the chief of the Guilds, joined by workers from other Arti, apply for redress of their grievances to the Guild authorities, demanding Arti for workmen, and much else; then, finding that useless, they rise *en masse*, burn the depot of the Wool Guild and the palaces of the Albizzi, break open prisons, capture the Palace of the Podestà (the Bargello) and seize the great Gonfalon of the People. Bearing this their ringleader, a woolcomber, barefoot and scantily clothed (*scalzo e con poco indosso*, says Machiavelli), leads them two days later against and into the Palace of the Signoria itself, whence the Signori had taken flight; and here the honest woolcomber, Michele di Lando, is acclaimed Gonfaloniere and Signore of the city.

Michele, with the help of the Eight and a special *balia* (commission), elected a new Signoria and created the wished-for workmen's Guilds, and altogether proved as much of a success (not abusing his dictatorial powers) as Pittacus himself, well deserving Machiavelli's eulogy as *uomo sagace e prudente*. He was himself a worker and had no respect for the rowdy *canaglia*, the *plebaccia*, which had taken advantage of a workmen's strike in order to loot and rob and extort undeserved privileges. When therefore these became so impudent as to

<sup>1</sup> *Ciompi* probably = French *compère*, a term used by the Breton and Gascon mercenaries to denote their comrades. The Italian *compare* (god-father) is not so used.

## FLORENCE (1300-1400)

elect a Government of their own, which located itself in S. Maria Novella and proclaimed Michele di Lando deprived of his powers, he 'bade the great bell, the *vacca*, be sounded and the great Gonfalon be raised, and mounted on his horse, and with many armed men made his way to S. Maria Novella to give them battle.' But they too had set forth, by another route, and in his absence were assailing the Palazzo Vecchio; so he hastened back and dispersed them, 'and the tumult was suppressed solely by the manly courage of the Gonfaloniere Michele.'

But the many-headed beast proved too wily and too strong. The mob influenced the new Government more and more, and, as so often happens in the history of republics, the insolence and tyranny of democracy led to an alliance between the more moderate of the rich democratic burghers and the Guelf aristocrats.<sup>1</sup> By 1382 this alliance had gained so much power that a *balia* (elective commission) was appointed with power to modify the constitution. Both Salvestro de' Medici and Michele Lando were banished; the 'Ciompi' legislation was annulled; the *Arti Maggiori* reassumed their former sway; 'fat' burghers, *popolani nobili*, and Guelf *Ottimati* came again to the fore, and the democratic elements of the Government once more underwent degeneration and disappeared. Maso of the Albizzi succeeded Michele as Gonfaloniere; then came his son Rinaldo; and under the rule of these and other burgher nobles<sup>2</sup> Florence enjoyed the semblance of internal peace. But the semblance was deceptive, for the people were constantly irritated by grievous war-taxes, and sedition and faction, suppressed by the mailed fist of mercenary soldiery, rendered the death penalty and proscription and banishment too common occurrences for the security of the State.

A good illustration of the dangers incurred by the wholesale banishment of political rivals is given by Machiavelli, who

<sup>1</sup> The Parte Guelfa, having outlived its use, was now practically extinct.

<sup>2</sup> We hear now (c. 1390) of another of the Medici, Vieri, who held office and was in such favour with the *plebe* that, says Machiavelli, 'if he had been more ambitious than good he could have easily made himself prince of the city.'

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

describes an attempt made by the *banditi*, or *fuorusciti*, as they were called, to re-enter the city by force. There were at Bologna, he says, numerous exiles (he mentions an Antonio dei Medici among them), all wild-tempered youths and ready to risk any adventure in order to effect their return. To these news was brought secretly that certain of the *ammoniti* ('warned' citizens) living in Florence would receive them in their houses, whence they could sally forth to assassinate the Gonfaloniere, Maso degli Albizzi, and call the people to arms; and the support of many families, such as the Ricci, the Adimari, and the Medici, was promised. So on August 4, 1397, they entered the city secretly and began to watch the movements of Messer Maso. He was seen to leave home and enter the shop of a druggist (*speziale*) near S. Piero Maggiore. They at once collected their accomplices and surrounded the shop; but Maso had disappeared. Then (like Harmodius and Aristogeiton, 'wishing to do something at all hazards') they hastened to the Mercato Vecchio and slew an adversary, and raising the cry, *Popolo! Arme! Libertà! Morte ai tiranni!* they turned down the Calimala to the Mercato Nuovo and slew another. But as nobody took up arms in their favour they retreated to the Loggia della Neghittosa,<sup>1</sup> and from a high position harangued the mob. Then, finding it all in vain, they took refuge in S. Reparata (the Duomo—by this time really called S. Maria del Fiore), but the doors were burst open by an armed force of the Signoria and some of the exiles were slain on the spot. The others, together with those citizens who had invited them, were executed.

During the last decade of the century Florence was engaged also in conflicts with external foes. War in Italy was now carried on mostly by means of foreign and native mercenaries (*assoldati*, 'soldiers'), whom wealthy despots and republics hired to fight their battles—a system that had its evils and called forth most piteous lamentations from patriots such as Petrarca, but was perhaps advantageous to commercial

<sup>1</sup> The 'Loggia of the Lazy Woman'—a favourite lounging place in Via Calzaioli belonging to the Adimari family.



## FLORENCE (1300-1400)

prosperity and to that kind of art which luxuriates under such conditions, like the fat weed that rots on Lethe's wharf. These wars of Florence proved fairly successful, and Arezzo came by purchase into its possession; but the fierce struggle against the ambitious and uncannily invincible Gian Galeazzo of Milan, who was evidently aiming at kingly power, dragged on undecided for many years. The Milanese *condottiere* Jacopo dal Verme proved too much for the English *condottiere* of the Florentines, Sir John Hawkwood, whom he nearly captured by cutting the dykes of the river Po. In 1392 a peace was signed at Genoa; but it was of short duration. In 1398 a strong league was formed by Venice, Florence, and other cities against Gian Galeazzo, who had now become a duke and more intent than ever on proclaiming himself King of Northern and Central Italy. The Milanese despot had his usual success—due partly perhaps to his large use of newly invented artillery, if not to the aid afforded him (as was believed) by the devil. He made himself master of Pisa, Siena, Perugia, Parma, Verona, Bologna, and other cities, and was gathering together all his forces for a crushing blow at Florence when suddenly, in 1402, he died—perhaps of the plague—to the inexpressible relief of the Florentines.

This dramatic intervention of Chance or Providence saved not only Florence but also the whole of Italy from much misery and bloodshed, and probably from a period of pitiable enslavement under Milanese despotism. Had Gian Galeazzo succeeded in his designs, the century that was now beginning would have seen in Florence something very different from that wondrous springtide and early summer of the new art and learning which remind us of the days of Pericles.

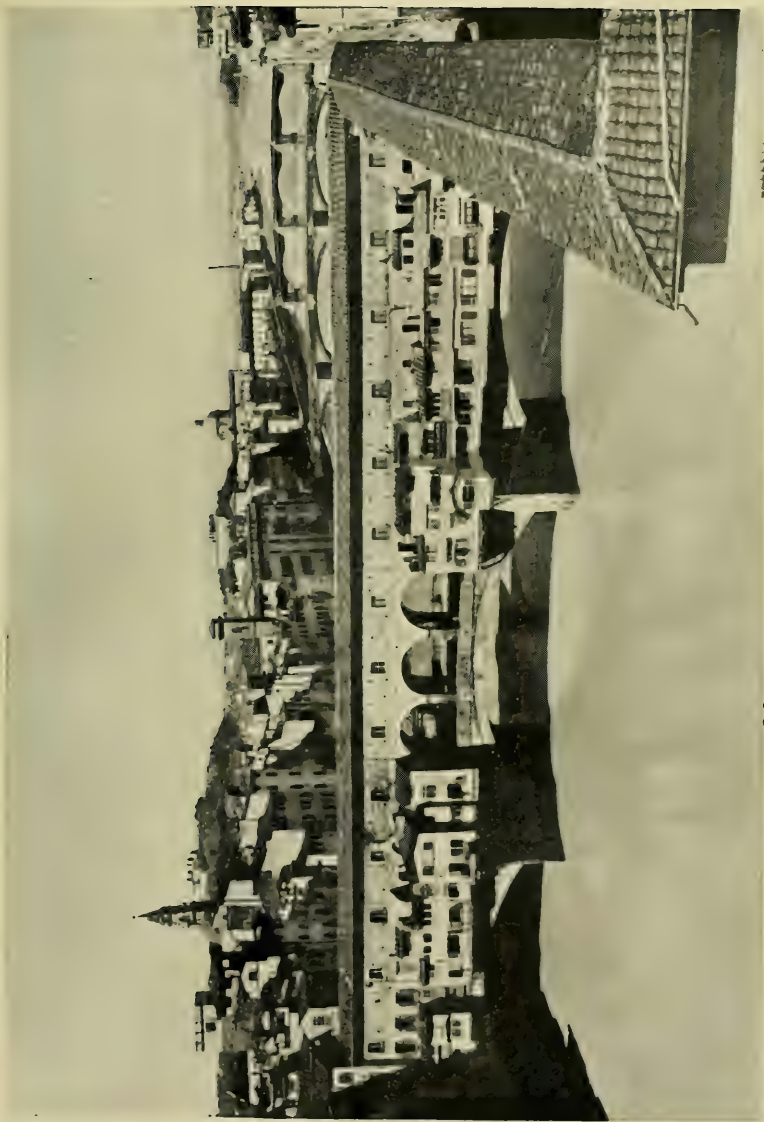
We have now arrived at the end of the Trecento. Looking forward a little we may note that in the interval ere the advent of the Medici (about 1430) Florence held courageously her position as perhaps the leading independent city of Italy. She conquered Pisa in 1406, and thus obtained for her trade the longed-for opening to the sea. For some years she waged war with Ladislaus of Naples and forced him to cede Cortona ;

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

but war was renewed and the Florentines again escaped a probable catastrophe—this time through the death of the Neapolitan king (1414). Meanwhile gradually but surely democracy was being undermined by the insidious influence of generous and popular magnates, among whom the Medici finally won the first place.

The art and literature of Italy during the century that has been occupying our attention is discussed, as far as space allows, in later chapters. Here we may note in passing that after the death of Manfred at Benevento in 1266 and the disappearance of the Hohenstaufen dynasty from Southern Italy the home of Italian literature was shifted from Sicily to Tuscany, and that it was Florentine poets—Dante and his school—whose ‘new sweet style’ enabled Italians to be the first of Europeans to enter the realms of modern poetry, as it was also Florentine artists—Cimabue and Giotto—who began the new style that was to initiate the glories of European painting. In Florence, too, by the beginning of the Trecento, Arnolfo di Cambio and other architects had erected or planned some of the finest edifices of true Italian Gothic, such as S. Croce, S. Maria Novella, the Bargello, the Palazzo Vecchio, and the new Duomo, which was to take more than a century to complete. Then, after the great inundation of 1333, arose Giotto’s Campanile and many other beautiful buildings, and the bridges were re-erected in more solid form.<sup>1</sup> Then we have the sculptures on the Campanile, so highly praised by Ruskin, and the first wondrous bronze door of the Baptistery by Andrea Pisano, and the Bigallo and the Loggia of the Signoria (now called *dei Lanzi*), planned perhaps by Orcagna, and lastly the beautiful reliefs on his Tabernacle in Orsanmichele. (See Fig. 13 (b).)

<sup>1</sup> Three of the four bridges, viz. Vecchio, Trinità, and Carraia, were swept away by this inundation. The present P. Vecchio was built in about 1360 by Taddeo Gaddi. Originally it was Roman. Alla Carraia and Trinità bridges before the inundation were of wood. They have been considerably rebuilt. The only Florentine bridge that still exists, or rather still existed when I first saw it, in 1872, much as it was in Dante’s lifetime, is the P. alle Grazie, originally called Rubaconte (and so called in *Purg.* xii) from a Podestà of the year 1237.



6. PONTE VECCHIO, FLORENCE



7. TOMB OF ANDREA DANDOLO



## FLORENCE (1300-1400)

As for Florentine literature—after Dante, as after Giotto, came a somewhat barren transition period, like that of late spring before the early summer flowers have begun. But it is a period that can show some valuable historians, such as Dino Compagni (or whoever wrote the *Cronaca*) and the three Villani. Then, during the middle of the century, down to about 1374, we have two very celebrated writers, both Florentine though neither born in Florence, Petrarca and Boccaccio. These, as well as Dante and as well as Giotto and Arnolfo and others, we must leave for a future occasion.

## CHAPTER V

### VENICE (1300-1400)

(See List 3; and for Venetian Architecture during the Trecento  
see Chapter VII of this Part)

THE story of Venice from its first origins down to about 1300 is sketched in *Medieval Italy*. In the course of the next three centuries the city attained a world-wide fame and importance both as a great maritime power and as a home of art. There will therefore be very much more to relate than in the former volume. But as space is limited I shall have once more to content myself with a concise narrative, selecting a few episodes and personalities for fuller treatment. In the present chapter, after a few preliminary remarks, I shall touch briefly on the main events of Venetian history, internal and external, during the Trecento, and shall describe a little more fully two interesting episodes, namely, the tragedy of Marino Faliero and the War of Chioggia. The state of things as viewed from the Venetian standpoint in the early years of the Trecento has been already indicated in the Historical Outline, but it will be well to recall a few facts.

After Pisa's sea-power had been finally broken by the battle of Meloria (1284) the struggle for supremacy on the Mediterranean lay wholly between Genoa and Venice. During the reign of the Doge Pietro Gradenigo (1289-1311) the intense competition of the two rivals in the Levant and the Euxine, through the ports of which seas they maintained a large trade with the Far East, led to many serious conflicts.<sup>1</sup> One of

<sup>1</sup> At this epoch the Turks under Osman I (*d.* 1326) were predominant in Palestine, Egypt, Tripoli, and much of Asia Minor; and Venice headed a league against their piracies. At Constantinople the Greek Byzantine Empire had been lately (1261) revived by Michael Palaeologus, who had expelled the

## VENICE (1300-1400)

these (at Curzola, in 1298) proved so disastrous for the Venetians that they were glad to agree to a *modus vivendi*, and for a time peace was kept.<sup>1</sup>

While Venice was thus with more or less success 'planting the Lion' in Eastern lands, and beginning to indulge in the dream of *terra ferma* extension in Italy, events of no less importance had been taking place in the city itself. For many years the Venetian constitution had been becoming more and more oligarchical. A Venetian Doge differed essentially from a Florentine Gonfaloniere, seeing that he held office for life, and attempts had been made to prevent the office from becoming hereditary and to limit its powers; but these attempts for the most part had resulted in granting greater powers to a small number of aristocratic families. In early times the General Assembly of the citizens (the *Arengo*) had elected the Doge, who was to some extent controlled by a Privy Council and a Senate (*I Pregadi*); but in 1172, during the interregnum that followed the murder of Doge Michieli, what rapidly became an exclusively aristocratic *Maggior Consiglio* of 480 members took the place of the People's Parliament, and very soon the election of the Doge was entrusted to a small committee of eleven.<sup>2</sup> In course of time the number of families from whom the Doge and the members of the *Maggior Consiglio* were chosen became ever more limited, and at last, in 1292, this limitation was legalized by the so-called *Serrata* (Closure) of the Council, by which membership, and therefore public office, were made impossible for those citizens (and they formed the

'Latin Emperors.' See *Medieval Italy*, p. 308. At Caffa (in the Crimea), Tana (Sea of Azof), Sinope, Trebizond, and many other distant ports, Genoa or Venice, or both, had settlements, and treaty rights, and were in constant collision. At Constantinople both had splendid quarters surrounded by great walls. The whole of the suburb Pera was occupied by the Genoese.

<sup>1</sup> At Curzola Marco Polo was made prisoner. He wrote his famous *Milione* in a Genoese prison.

<sup>2</sup> This *coup* excited great indignation, but the *Maggior Consiglio* was pacified by the empty phrase, used on the presentation of the new Doge, 'This is your Doge, if ye are willing.' The Venetian habit of delegating the powers of representative assemblies to small committees proved fatal to republicanism.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

vast majority) who had hitherto never sat in the Council, or whose ancestors had not done so.

The very next year the *Serrata* caused a rising, which was bloodily repressed.<sup>1</sup> This was followed by many brawls and disturbances, aggravated by an unfortunate war concerning Ferrara, and a papal Interdict, and an outbreak of the plague,<sup>2</sup> until in 1310—the year in which Henry of Luxemburg crossed the Alps—Baiamonte Tiepolo, at the head of disaffected nobles and other citizens, nearly succeeded in murdering the ambitious and autocratic old Doge and overturning the constitution.<sup>3</sup> The conspiracy was so widespread and its leaders so influential that, though some of these were executed, the Doge felt it advisable to allow Tiepolo and his more prominent followers to withdraw from Venice; but to guard against this new external danger and to investigate the sources of the plot a committee of ten was elected. This committee of public safety was at first empowered to act for a few months, but its lease of life was again and again renewed, and in 1335 it became a permanent and powerful Council under the name of 'The Ten' (*I Dieci*)—a name scarcely less dreaded than that of the later 'Highest and Terrible Tribunal' of the three Inquisitors of State.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Chroniclers relate that when the mob was clamouring at the gates of the Palace, Doge Gradenigo offered to admit the ringleaders one by one, promising that 'they should receive all they deserved'—and he kept his word by hanging them.

<sup>2</sup> This war concerning Ferrara is important as the first active interference of Venice in the internal politics of a mainland city. Venice had long ago helped to establish the Este dynasty in Ferrara, and now that a question of succession had arisen it sent troops to support one claimant. But Pope Clement V claimed overlordship, as Ferrara was a city of the famous Legacy of Countess Matilda, and what with his Interdict and the plague the new ambitious Venetian oligarchy had much the worst of the quarrel.

<sup>3</sup> The plot was betrayed by an accomplice. Fierce fighting took place in the *piazze* and streets. The turn of the battle was caused by a stone mortar thrown from a window by a woman, which killed Tiepolo's standard-bearer, as happened of old to King Pyrrhus.

<sup>4</sup> Visitors to the Doges' Palace will remember the *Sala* of the *Dieci* and that of the *Three Inquisitors*, with the *Bocca del Leone* for secret accusations. As the Venetian constitution underwent but little change after 1310 we will get rid of the subject here with the remark that its constituent parts were



## VENICE (1300-1400)

A few months after the Tiepolo conspiracy Doge Pietro Gradenigo died. The story goes that Stefano Giustiniani, a senator, who was chosen as his successor, renounced the honour and retired to a monastery, and that an old man called Zorzi il Santo ('Georgie the Saint') was asked to accept, and did accept, the office in the hope of liberating Venice from the papal Interdict. However that may be, the reign of Zorzi—the 50th Venetian Doge—lasted only ten months. His successor, Giovanni Soranzo, ruled for 16 years (till 1328), during which period, after reducing to submission the revolted city of Zara, Venice enjoyed a considerable measure of peace and prosperity.<sup>1</sup> Venetian traders frequented the ports and marts of England, Flanders, the Levant, and the Euxine, while at home the silk industry, introduced from Lucca, flourished vigorously, and the glass factories of Murano began to extend their fame through the known world. But the Turkish peril was looming ever bigger in the Near East (where Osman's grandson, Soliman, was ere long to set foot on European soil at Gallipoli), and the new *terra ferma* policy of the Venetians was bringing them into collision with some of the powerful Signori of North Italian cities.

Of these despots one of the most redoubtable was Mastino II della Scala. Together with his brother Alberto he had succeeded his uncle Can Grande, who before his death (1329) had extended his sway over Vicenza, Padua, Belluno, Treviso, and other towns. Mastino mastered also Brescia, Parma, and Lucca, so that the Della Scala Signoria had become a dangerous rival of the Visconti despotism and a serious threat to independent cities such as Florence and Venice. It was therefore natural that the mainland aspirations of Venice should

(1) Doge, (2) his six Privy Councillors, (3) the *Collegio*, or *Giunta* of Ministers of State, (4) the *Dieci*, and later the *Inquisitors*, committees of public safety, (5) the Senate, or *Pregadi*, (6) the *Maggior Consiglio*, originally a representative assembly chosen from the *sestieri*, but now a close aristocratic council. Besides these there were later the nine *Procuratori*, whose name one knows so well from the *Procuratie* of the Piazza at Venice.

<sup>1</sup> In 1321 Dante visited Venice as envoy of Guido da Polenta of Ravenna. He died in the same year.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

incite Mastino's jealous opposition. He began, in the first year of the reign of Doge Fr. Dandolo (1329), by blackmailing Venetian goods passing through his domains. Venice responded with a similar measure, but its existence depended on its trade, and war was inevitable. The raid of John of Bohemia deferred this for a few years, but finally a league was formed against the Scaligers by Venice, Florence, and Azzo Visconti of Milan. Brescia and Bergamo were seized by Azzo, Florence was promised Lucca (but only got it by paying for it, and lost it soon afterwards to the Pisans), and Venice not only was allotted Treviso and some other towns but became practically mistress of Padua, though she allowed the Carrara family (which Can Grande had deposed from power) to reassume the nominal lordship of the city.<sup>1</sup> Mastino was obliged to make a humiliating peace (1339) and to limit his rule to Verona and Vicenza.

A magnificent tourney in the Piazza of St. Mark celebrated the successful issue of this war; but against the many advantages accruing from the new *terra ferma* domains was to be set the fact that there were now extensive land frontiers to defend, and that Venetia had become practically conterminous with the territory of the ambitious and aggressive Visconti.

For a time, however, all went on smoothly. In spite of Genoese rivalry and the ominous advances of the Turks, Venetian commerce spread ever more widely, while at home many fine buildings, palaces and churches, were rising.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Massilio of Carrara (a castle near Padua) was, under Venetian sovereignty, the first real Signore of Padua, though his family had been predominant since 1318. It is said that Mastino had foolishly sent Massilio as his envoy to Venice, and that when at supper Massilio dropped his napkin and both he and Doge Dandolo bent down to recover it, the clever but faithless envoy made a whispered pact by which Padua was surrendered by treachery to Venetian troops, and Massilio was made its lord.

<sup>2</sup> *E.g.* the Frari and SS. Giovanni e Paolo (both begun about 1330). A new Campanile (except for its top, which was 16th-century work, the same Campanile that collapsed on July 14, 1902) was built *c.* 1329. The south side of the Doges' Palace was at this time being finished, and the huge Sala of the Council being constructed. A few, much-restored, palaces (Gritti, Contarini-Fasan, etc.) are of this epoch—that of early, simple, Venetian Gothic. There are also a few early Venetian Gothic tombs—*e.g.* that of Andrea Dandolo in

## VENICE (1300-1400)

Francesco Dandolo, who died in 1339, was succeeded by another Gradenigo, and he by the young, vigorous, and gifted Andrea Dandolo, during whose reign (1343-1354) momentous events were to take place.<sup>1</sup> One of these was the visitation of Venice by the Great Plague, which in spite of an attempt to cut off communication with the mainland found its way into the city and raged with such virulence that three-fifths of the population perished, and some fifty noble families were annihilated.

While this terrific pestilence was still at its height the Venetians felt themselves drifting into another war with Genoa. The quarrel began at Caffa,<sup>2</sup> a port in the Crimea, where the rivals had in vain arranged a *modus vivendi*. Doge Dandolo sent envoys to Genoa to protest, but the insolent answer was given that the presence of Venice in the Euxine was due solely to the sufferance of the Genoese. No sooner therefore had the plague abated in both cities than the two fleets, led respectively by Niccolò Pisani and Paganino Doria, began operations. Emboldened by a successful action off Negropont (Euboea), and by the alliance of Peter IV of Aragon, who supplied a score of galleys, the Venetians, in 1352, attacked

St. Mark's. Venice at this time had its magnificent Byzantine and Romanesque architecture and mosaics, and was beginning to erect some of its finest early Gothic edifices, but of course the later Venetian Gothic and the Renaissance architecture has added greatly to its glories.

<sup>1</sup> Andrea Dandolo was a man of learning and refinement, and a patron of the arts. He compiled from official documents a *Cronaca*, which is most valuable for Venetian history, but extends only to about 1300. He was only about 35 years of age when elected Doge. His tomb (see Fig. 7), in St. Mark's Baptistery, is finely described by Ruskin (*Stones of Venice*).

<sup>2</sup> The old Greek Theodosia. It was strongly fortified by the Genoese, and had its own magistrates, councils, coinage, etc. Not only Caffa, but Cambalo (Balaclava), Trebizond, Tana, and other Genoese settlements on the Black Sea flourished before the Venetians became dangerous rivals. Genoese merchants by the beginning of the Trecento had found their way not only to Erzerum and Persia, but to India (where Genoese money was quite common) and even China—as well as to England and the Netherlands—and we hear of Genoese war-fleets, used against Pisa and Venice, of 200 galleys with crews of about 250 men. In the inhuman use of convicts as galley-slaves and the traffic in slaves (especially Caucasians) Venice, sad to say, especially distinguished herself. For Venetian ships and commerce see Part II, Chap. V.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

Doria's fleet, drawn up under the walls of Pera, the Genoese quarter of Constantinople. The battle was desperate and was continued through the night by the light of the burning vessels. The losses of the Venetians were very serious. They determined to strike nearer home, and formed a junction with a Catalan (Aragonese) squadron off Cagliari, in the south of Sardinia—which island, lost by the Pisans after the disaster at Meloria, had been long a bone of contention between Genoa and the Aragonese monarchs. A strong fleet under Antonio Grimaldi was sent from Genoa, and a fierce conflict took place (February 1353) near Loiera. Almost every Genoese ship was sunk or captured. Grimaldi escaped in his galley to Genoa, where the consternation was so great that the Senate offered to surrender the lordship of the city to Archbishop Giovanni Visconti, Signor of Milan, on the condition that he would supply means for the building of another fleet. This was done, and thus Venice and Milan, the two most powerful states of North Italy, divided on land only by Paduan and Veronese territories that were virtually Venetian protectorates, were now, somewhat strangely, brought into conflict on the sea, Milan having become for the time, so to speak, a sea-power.

To the credit of Archbishop Giovanni it should be said that he endeavoured, we may hope sincerely, to bring about an understanding, and sent Petrarca, who was at this time his guest and was a friend of Doge Dandolo, to Venice in order to negotiate a treaty. But the hostility was too embittered. On both sides vast preparations were made. Suddenly the news reached Venice that the Genoese, led once more by Doria, had seized Parenzo, some 30 miles south of Trieste. The alarm of the Venetians was great, for Niccolò Pisani with many Venetian galleys was absent in Sardinian waters, still awaiting the new Genoese fleet. And the consternation was intensified by the sudden death of the Doge (1354).

### MARINO FALIERO

Marino Faliero is a name that in the minds of many revives vivid memories of the Doges' Palace—of the Giants' 120



## VENICE (1300-1400)

Staircase,<sup>1</sup> and the vast Council-hall where Tintoretto's *Paradiso* looms like a sunset amidst thunderclouds, and where a black-painted space interrupts the line of ducal portraits with its sinister inscription: *Hic est locus Marini Falieri decapitati pro criminibus*. The conspiracy of Marino Faliero was not so deep-rooted, nor so dangerous perhaps, as that headed by Tiepolo, but its personal character makes it appeal more strongly to one's dramatic instincts. Moreover, the short reign of this Doge (not seven months) is notorious for another tragedy—the Modone disaster. I shall therefore give some space to it, acting on a principle different from that of the Ten, who in their official documents, it is said, left no record of the Faliero tragedy except the words *Ne scribatur*.

When Andrea Dandolo suddenly died the choice fell on this man, Marino Faliero. He had distinguished himself in days past at Zara, and had held naval commands. He had also been the Podestà of Treviso<sup>2</sup> and was now ambassador at the papal court—according to Sanudo, at Rome, but according to Petrarca 'on the Rhone,' that is, at Avignon; and Petrarca's version is probably right, for he was, as he tells us, not only a friend of Andrea Dandolo, but also connected with Marino 'by long acquaintance.'

'When the new Doge,' says Sanudo, 'was about to land in this city, on the 5th of October, 1354, a thick mist arose and the air became so dark that he was compelled to disembark at the piazza of S. Marco, on the very spot where, between the two columns, evildoers are put to death; and to all men this seemed of very ominous augury.' Just a month later the whole of the Venetian fleet was captured by the Genoese. It happened thus. We have seen how Paganino Doria had

<sup>1</sup> Byron, in his play *Marino Faliero*, makes the execution take place on the 'Giants' Staircase.' The Venetian chronicler Sanudo, as we shall see, mentions the 'stone staircase,' and Petrarca speaks of the 'marble stair'; but the present staircase dates from c. 1490, and the 'Giants' (*i.e.* statues of Neptune and Mars) are the work of Sansovino (c. 1555).

<sup>2</sup> Where, being, as Petrarca tells us, 'furnished with more courage than wisdom,' he 'so buffeted [says Sanudo] a bishop who had kept him waiting for the Mass that he almost felled him to the ground.'

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

surprised and captured Parenzo in Istria. He had then withdrawn to the Grecian archipelago, and thither he was followed by the Venetian fleet, led by Niccolò Pisani and his nephew Vettor, who in after years was to prove the saviour of Venice. As the season of storms was approaching, the Venetians decided to winter in the haven of Portolungo, near Modone, at the south-west extremity of the Morea. Doria, returning homewards for the winter, was driven to shelter on the lee of Sapienza island in the same neighbourhood. He discovered the Venetian fleet, which was quite unconscious of the presence of the enemy, and suddenly entering the unprotected harbour cut off the Venetians from the shore and at the same time attacked them in front. Every Venetian vessel, it is said, was captured. Some assert that Niccolò Pisani was taken to Genoa as prisoner; others say that he escaped to Modone and thence to Venice, where he was severely punished. There may be some confusion between him and his nephew, Vettor, of whose experiences we shall hear ere long.

While Venice was still stunned by this blow—which luckily Genoa could not follow up, being already anxious to free herself from vassalage to Milan—a short and bloody drama was enacted which is testified to by that black-veiled space with its tragic inscription. ‘Heaven,’ says the old chronicler, ‘allowed my Lord Duke Marino to go out of his senses so that he might bring himself to an evil death, and as it was fated for him to have his head cut off, therefore a cause for such effect necessarily happened.’ According to the usual account, which is probably fairly correct, a certain high-tempered young noble, Michele Steno by name (long afterwards a Doge), being in love with one of the ladies-in-waiting, behaved somewhat indecorously at a court function and was ignominiously ejected. As he passed the ducal throne he scribbled on it some words that had insulting reference to the Dogessa. The fact was discovered and the Doge was furious, demanding the death penalty or banishment for life; but ‘taking into consideration that he was a lover,’ the judges inflicted a short confinement and a year’s exile. While still smarting under

## VENICE (1300-1400)

this insult and the pointed disregard of his authority, Marino Faliero was appealed to by an admiral (some say a 'dock-hand' at the arsenal) who had been struck brutally in the face by another insolent young noble—a 'gentleman of the Cà Barbaro.' 'Wherefore comest thou to me?' exclaimed the Doge. 'Think of Michele Steno and how my office is respected!' The result was that Marino Faliero was implicated in a plot. On April 15, 1355, the great bells of St. Mark's were to be sounded (this was never done but by order of a Doge), and when all the chief nobles had collected in the Piazza they were to be surrounded and cut to pieces, and, as says Sanudo, 'my Lord Marino Faliero the Doge was to be proclaimed the Lord of Venice'—or possibly the idea was to proclaim a republic. Fortunately, or unfortunately, the affection of one of the conspirators for a friend led to the discovery of the plot. Forthwith secret meetings were held by the Ten and the heads of other Councils. Orders were given that the bells should not be rung, that the Arsenal and other public buildings should be closed, and that the ringleaders should be arrested. That the Doge himself was an accomplice was at first not known, and when the suspicion arose so great was the consternation that the Ten resolved to elect a special committee of twenty to help them in their deliberations; and it was decreed that Faliero should be likewise arrested, and that he, as well as the other prisoners, should be 'examined'—that is, tortured; 'and thus the truth of the plot was ascertained.'

As for the others, they were 'hanged on the red pillars of the balcony of the Palace, from which the Doge was wont to look on at tourneys and bull-fights; and they were hanged with gags in their mouths.' The Doge himself was vouchsafed a more formal trial. 'On Friday, the 16th of April, judgment was given in the Council of the Ten that my Lord Marino Faliero, the Doge, should have his head cut off, and that the execution should be done on the landing place of the stone staircase where the Doges take their oath when they first enter the Palace. On the following day, the doors of the

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

Palace being shut, the Doge had his head cut off, about the hour of noon. And the cap of State was taken from off his head ere that he came downstairs, at the door of the Sala of the Great Council. And when the execution was over, it is said, one of the Council of the Ten went to the columns <sup>1</sup> over against the Piazza of S. Marco and showed the bloody sword to the people, crying out with a loud voice, *Lo the doom that hath fallen on the traitor*. And the doors were opened and the people crowded in to behold the body of the beheaded Doge. . . . Then, after the traitors had been hanged and the Doge had been executed, the State remained in great tranquillity and peace. And the body of the Doge was removed in a barge with eight torches to the church of SS. Giovanni e Paolo.' <sup>2</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

Thus ended the last serious attempt <sup>3</sup> to overthrow the patrician oligarchy and the power of that dreaded *Consiglio dei Dieci* which had now become virtually supreme in the State—had tightened its throttling grip, like some Old Man of the Sea, round the neck of republican liberty. One of the first acts of the new Doge, Giovanni Gradenigo, was to make peace with Genoa—that city being, as we have seen, in spite of its capture of the Venetian fleet, in a difficult position and anxious to rid itself of its overbearing Milanese allies, namely the three Visconti brothers—for Archbishop Giovanni had died in 1354. By the treaty Genoese warships were excluded from the Adriatic, Venetian from Genoese waters, and the trading vessels of both cities, for three years, from the Sea

<sup>1</sup> The two columns of the Piazzetta. See above, and *Medieval Italy*, p. 423. More probably he came out into the balcony of the Palace.

<sup>2</sup> The burying-place of many Doges. If his tomb was ever there—which one can hardly believe—it has disappeared. Sanudo says it was removed to S. Maria della Pace. Byron was shown a sarcophagus and was told a story about its having been opened—but it is not worth repeating.

<sup>3</sup> As we shall see later, the abolition of the People's Parliament (*Arengo*, or *Concio*) and other unconstitutional proceedings of the Ten, as when they ordered Doge Foscarelli to abdicate, incited resentment and opposition on the part of the Great Council, but by creating small and absolute committees out of their own body—such as that of the Three Inquisitors—they retained their supremacy.





8. THE PALACE OF THE DOGES, VENICE



6. TOMB OF GIAN GALEAZZO VISCONTI

## VENICE (1300-1400)

of Azof. With a wondrous energy and recuperative power that remind one of ancient Athens, or Rome, Venice at once built, or changed merchant ships into, very numerous war-galleys, and at the expiration of the pact was ready to re-establish her sea-commerce not only in the Sea of Azof but throughout the known world, from Egypt to Flanders. In *terra ferma* policy likewise the Venetians showed determination and vigour in spite of disasters. King Louis (Ludwig) of Hungary—known to us already in connexion with Joanna of Naples—had taken advantage of the misfortunes of Venice in order to demand the cession of Dalmatia. This had been indignantly refused, and the Hungarians now (in 1356, the gallant but unfortunate Dolfino being Doge) invaded Venetian territory, besieged Treviso, and even attempted to cross the lagunes and surprise Venice itself; and finally the Venetians were compelled to accept a humiliating peace (1358), surrendering Dalmatia in order to save Treviso and the rest of mainland Venetia. During this war the Signor of Padua, Francesco Carrara, who was nominally under the sovranity of Venice, took part with the Hungarian king. The Venetians had even been obliged to receive him with honours as Ludwig's envoy; but it was not likely that they would forget such humiliation, and we shall see how some forty-five years later his son paid for his treason with his life.

After this calamity Venice once more proved her extraordinary vitality, but, as with the ancient Athenian and the modern British Empire, ever-increasing commerce and sea-power began once more to excite the fierce hostility of her one great maritime rival. And, besides this, she was now to undergo a bitter experience, such as Britain underwent when she lost her American colonies; and she was to gain from the experience no such wisdom as Britain gained in regard to the true and the false principles of empire-building. The trouble began in Candia (Crete), which was a Venetian colony. By the rules of the *Serrata* residence abroad cancelled the right to belong to the *Maggior Consiglio*, and consequently the right to hold office. Colonials of noble birth naturally resented

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

their exclusion from colonial honours. They made common cause with those who claimed Candia for the Candiots, or demanded at least Federation, with a measure of Home Rule, and twenty representatives (*savi*—‘wise men’ or ‘councillors’) in an Imperial Parliament in Venice. ‘We were not aware,’ answered the Venetians, ‘that you possessed twenty wise men in Candia.’ A tax, not on tea, but for harbour improvements, brought things to a point (1364). The Candiots refused to pay if their demands were ignored; so war broke out; but the rebels were unorganized, undisciplined, and ill-armed, and in a short time they were reduced to submission.

This ‘reconquest of Candia,’ as it was called, proved incomplete, for two years later the rebellion blazed up again dangerously, and was not without much bloodshed finally extinguished. But at Venice great exultation was caused by the first easy success. *Te Deums* were sung, and a splendid show was held in the Piazza—at which, it is interesting to note, the poet Petrarca was present, seated, as he tells us,<sup>1</sup> at the right hand of the Doge, Marco Cornaro, on an awning-covered platform ‘in front of the church of S. Marco, where stand the four bronze horses.’

### THE WAR OF CHIOGGIA

On the accession of the next Doge, Andrea Contarini (1368–1382), troubles arose in connexion with Trieste, which revolted in favour of the Duke of Austria, and with Francesco Carrara, who again joined the foes of Venice. He was, however, abandoned by them and had to accept shameful conditions.<sup>2</sup> Then took place the famous War of Chioggia, which dramatic episode, ending as it did in the triumph of Venice after a

<sup>1</sup> He also describes how, standing with the Archbishop of Patras at the window of his house on the Riva degli Schiavoni, he saw the triumphant return of the first galley from Candia. He had settled in Venice about 1362. See Chap. VI.

<sup>2</sup> One condition was that he should come to Venice and supplicate pardon; but he seems to have sent his son; and Petrarca, who had a special gift for acquiring the friendship of those who were mortal foes, left his home at Arquà to accompany the young Carrara, and made an eloquent speech to the Doge on his behalf—a generous act soon repaid by disloyalty.



## VENICE (1300-1400)

conflict of a hundred years for the world's sea-supremacy, may well engage our attention for a few minutes. The causes that led to renewal of war between Venice and Genoa were, as usual, connected with their rivalry in the East. The first incident was caused by a quarrel about precedence between Genoese and Venetian officials at the coronation, in Cyprus, of the young Piero of the Lusignan dynasty (1373). The Venetians succeeded in throwing several Genoese out of the palace windows—a feat that reminds one of the *Fenstersturz* of Prag which preluded the Thirty Years' War. Hostilities took place and something like Sicilian Vespers seemed imminent, for the Cypriots favoured the Venetians. Genoa dispatched a strong fleet. Famagosta was seized and King Piero captured. Venice did not accept the challenge. Perhaps she was not quite ready. But later a question arose as to the ownership of Tenedos. The Genoese, as paramount then at Constantinople as the Germans were in August 1914, set on the Byzantine throne the rebel son of the Emperor John Palaeologus and made him try to eject the Venetians from the island. But the Venetians hoisted the Lion and defied their assailants (1378).

War having thus broken out, the Carrara, as usual disloyal, very willingly undertook to attack mainland Venetia; also Hungary, as well as Austria and Joanna of Naples, declared in favour of Genoa. Venice, on the other hand, had to rely on herself and on the benevolent neutrality of the Visconti and the King of Aragon. One Venetian admiral, Zeno, was sent to the East; the other, Vettor Pisani, the nephew of old Niccolò, was made commander of the Adriatic fleet. He began brilliantly with a defeat of the Genoese off the Latian coast, near Cape Anzio (Antium); but the archipelago of the Dalmatian coast gave great advantages to the piratical warfare of the Genoese—as it did lately to that of the Austrians—and after a year had elapsed the civilian home authorities, as not seldom happens, began to interfere with their admiral and sent him a couple of advisers (*Provveditori*), who induced him against his better judgment to issue forth from his winter

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

quarters at Pola and give battle to a powerful Genoese fleet (May 1379). The Venetians suffered a crushing defeat and lost all their Adriatic squadron except six ships, which fled to Parenzo. Vettor Pisani escaped to Venice. He was condemned to be imprisoned for half a year and to be ineligible to office for five years.

Pietro Doria, the Genoese admiral,<sup>1</sup> now crossed the Adriatic to attack Venice itself. The city is built on a group of islets through the midst of which winds its way the *Rivo Alto*, or 'Deep Stream' (*i.e.* Grand Canal)—doubtless once the main outlet of the Brenta. These islets, and many others, lie in a vast lagune, some 25 miles long and 5 broad—not including the *Laguna morta*, *i.e.* the swampy coast region. This *Laguna viva* is separated from the open sea by long and narrow lines of sand-dunes (*lidi*, 'shores'), through which there are several navigable passages, as will be seen by the accompanying map. In the southern waters of the Laguna, just inside one of these *porti*, lies Chioggia, which had the threefold advantage of easy access to the Adriatic and to the mainland and, by the *Canale Lombardo*, to Venice.<sup>2</sup> Two months after the battle of Pola the Genoese fleet arrived off the *lidi*. The Venetians had barred the nearest *porto* with chains, but Doria took his ships through the Malamocco passage. It was soon evident that he intended to capture Chioggia and make it his base, using the two *porti* of Chioggia and Brondolo for access to the sea and drawing supplies and reinforcements from the mainland, where Francesco Carrara had concentrated some 20,000 men.

Chioggia was held bravely by its Venetian garrison, but the enemy assailed it with overwhelming forces. From Venice no help could be expected, for while new war-galleys were being hastily prepared, only a flotilla of smaller vessels could be used to scour the Lagune, build palisades, block up channels and bar them with chains. It was therefore not long before the town was taken; and its capture produced at Venice

<sup>1</sup> His predecessor, Luciano Doria, was killed at the battle off Pola.

<sup>2</sup> The huge *Murazzi* with which the *lidi* are buttressed are of later date.

## VENICE (1300-1400)

such panic that the Government suggested to Carrara that they might be willing to treat; but they were met by the reply <sup>1</sup> that he 'meant not to desist till he had bridled and bitted St. Mark's horses [*prima d'imbrigliare i cavalli di S. Marco*].'

Then the Venetian people, thrusting aside their pusillanimous rulers, rose, demanding that every capable man and every possible vessel should be sent against the foe under the orders of the commander who alone was able to save Venice, and who had been unjustly cast into a dungeon. The Government demurred. They had tried, but in vain, to secure the services of the English *condottiere*, Sir John Hawkwood; they now tried to fob off the people by releasing Vettor Pisani and giving him a subordinate post under an admiral named Giustiniani. But the sailors 'vowed they would rather be cut in pieces . . . and as they left the palace they threw down the flag with many wicked words, which it is better to pass over in silence.'<sup>2</sup> Finally Vettor Pisani was made the Capitano del Golfo—the admiral of the Home Fleet—and old Doge Contarini, now over 70 years of age, 'showed himself wiser and more patriotic than the wiseacres of the Councils and Cabinets by insisting that he would accompany the new fleet of 34 galleys, which was now ready, having been built or converted in an extraordinarily short time and paid for by an extraordinarily successful war-loan.

First troops were landed on the Malamocco dunes, where, supported by a flotilla of boats, they gradually drove the enemy southwards till Doria found it necessary to concentrate all his forces in Chioggia. This was Vettor Pisani's opportunity, and he did not miss it. With his 34 galleys very fully manned and a large number of smaller vessels he suddenly assaulted the Genoese forts at the Porto di Chioggia and the Porto di Brondolo, and by sinking large hulks mid-stream he succeeded

<sup>1</sup> Byron (*Ch. Har.* iv) attributes the menace to Doria, and asserts (metaphorically perhaps) that the horses 'are bridled.' He wrote during Austrian usurpation. The horses are at present (1918) in Rome.

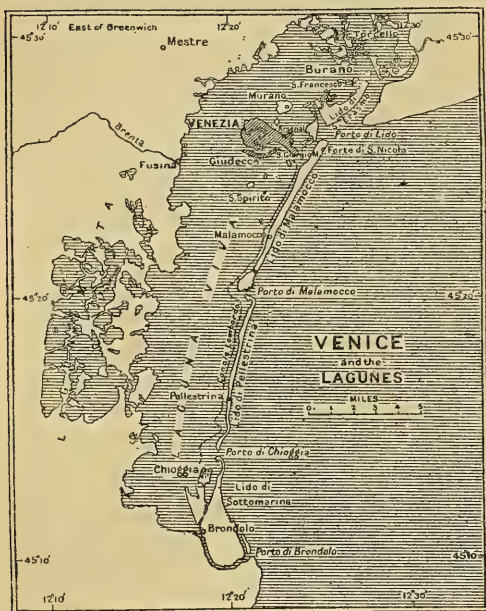
<sup>2</sup> Quoted from 'an old chronicler' by H. F. Brown in his *Venice*.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

in blocking both of these passages as well as that of Malamocco and the Chioggia entrance to the Canale Lombardo. Thus the Genoese were cut off entirely from the open sea and from access to Venice; for the navigation of the Laguna except by the canal was for war-galleys impossible, especially as the

Venetians had removed the *pali* (guiding-posts) and had erected many barriers. This happened in December 1379.

But in order to make the blockade effective the Venetian fleet had to lie to in the open sea, exposed off a lee-shore to the fury of the 'tyrants of Adria,' the south-easter and the African scirocco.<sup>1</sup> Ere long the sufferings and dangers of the situation became intolerable, and Vettor found it necessary



to promise to his men that he would raise the siege unless reinforcements arrived by New Year's Day.<sup>2</sup> These expected reinforcements were the war-galleys which, as we have already heard, the other Venetian admiral, Zeno, some eighteen months previously had taken with him to the Grecian archipelago. As luck would have it these ships did arrive—so say the chroniclers—on the very day in question, and a week later

<sup>1</sup> *Nec praecipitem Africum . . . nec rabiem Noti, quo non arbiter Hadriae major. . . .* (Horace).

<sup>2</sup> Doge Contarini is said to have drawn his sword and taken an oath that he would never return to Venice till Chioggia had fallen.



## VENICE (1300-1400)

Vettor Pisani was able to mount cannon<sup>1</sup> on the Brondolo dunes so as to command the town of Chioggia. A week later again the port and village of Brondolo were captured—which allowed the besiegers to leave the open sea—and attempts made by Francesco Carrara to throw troops and provisions into Chioggia were frustrated. Meanwhile one of Vettor's cannon-balls had struck (we may hope, unintentionally) the campanile of the church of Chioggia, and the falling masonry had happened to strike and kill the enemy's admiral, Pietro Doria. Under the command of his successor, Napoleone Grimaldi, the Genoese held out gallantly for six months, trying at times to cut channels through the dunes for the passage of their galleys, at other times building, with such wood as they could procure by demolishing houses, flat-bottomed vessels, such as would pass over the sunken hulks. But at last, faced by starvation, they found further resistance hopeless and surrendered unconditionally (June 24, 1380).

The War of Chioggia broke the sea-power of Genoa as effectually as the battle of Meloria had broken that of Pisa. The 15th century was to see the maritime supremacy of Venice at its meridian height and the beginning of its decline—the beginning of that long conflict with the Turks that ended in the disappearance of Venetian sea-power and the Venetian Empire.<sup>2</sup> Thus we see again how one Italian state arose on the ruins of others and was itself overthrown, and have occasion once more to lament the presence of those fatal tendencies which prevented Italian cities and Italian states—as those of ancient Greece—from forming any such federation as might have sufficed for self-defence and might have resulted in the

<sup>1</sup> Cannon were used at Crécy in 1346. We have already heard of them at Rome, and as having been used by Gian Galeazzo (p. 86).

<sup>2</sup> One may note here, what will be shown later more at length, that the downfall of Venice was not caused only by this dissolution of her Levantine Empire by the victorious Turk, against whom she made such a gallant stand for more than two centuries as the champion of Christendom. There were other causes at work. The discovery of the Cape route ruined her Eastern trade. The discovery of America resulted in Spanish sea-power. The rise of national Powers, as the French, the English, and the Austro-Spanish, made competition on the part of single Italian cities, or states, hopeless.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

creation of a powerful nation. We have seen these tendencies in the case of the old Lombard League ; we have also noted how later they made the federation of the Italian Communes impossible, and how in the internal constitution of these cities similar instincts rendered impossible any true republican liberty. And now we see the bitter rivalry and irreconcilable hatred of the two greatest maritime cities of Italy result in pitiable destruction of resources that might have saved, or at least helped to save, Europe from the horrors of Turkish invasion and Turkish rule, and Constantinople from the domination of the Oriental infidel. Moreover, as we saw in the case of Florence so we see in that of Venice instincts which are fatal to all true liberty. In its internal constitution, as we have noted, Venice became ever more and more a close oligarchy, all representative government and republican self-rule withering away to the very roots ; and this tendency is also very perceptible (as the case of Candia showed us) in the Venetian conception of Empire—a tendency fatal to all that makes an empire beneficent and permanent.

The capture of the Genoese fleet at Chioggia, although it made Venice supreme on the sea,<sup>1</sup> did not put an end to the war, which continued for another year. Peace was at last made through the mediation of Amadeo VI of Savoy, an ancestor of the present King of Italy. Venice, disheartened by ill-success on land, abandoned Dalmatia to Ludwig of Hungary and Treviso to the Duke of Austria, while Tenedos, which had caused the outbreak of the war, was put under the protectorate of Amadeo. But these losses were fully compensated by the very great extension of Venetian sea-commerce, which brought the city an immense amount of wealth and led ere long to her acquisition of very important oversea possessions, such as Corfu, Durazzo, Argos, Nauplia, and other

<sup>1</sup> Vettor Pisani, who went off at once to chase all Genoese ships from the seas, died two months later of wounds at Manfredonia. His statue, and the inscription from his tomb (once in Sant' Antonio), are now in the Arsenal. Frequent revolutions in Genoa (Doges deposed at the rate of two a year) so weakened the State that by the end of the century it became almost a vassal of France.

## VENICE (1300-1400)

places, which served as the foundation on which she was now to build up her great colonial empire.

In Italy, however, the outlook was by no means so bright for her. The ignoble policy of Francesco Carrara, who had ever and again played into the hands of Austria, Milan, and Genoa, had succeeded so brilliantly that he was now master of a very large extent of country between Padua and the Alps, including such important towns as Treviso, Bassano, and Belluno. But his treachery was to have its reward. He conceived the desire to annex the territory of the Veronese Scaligeri and formed a secret pact with Gian Galeazzo. The crafty Milanese viper, however, outwitted him, and having seized the whole of the Veronese domains showed manifest intention of seizing Padua also. The fugitive Antonio, the last and unworthy scion of the great Della Scala dynasty, had found his way to Venice. Thither came also envoys from his two assailants, now themselves deadly foes. The Carrara, on the one hand, sent a humble entreaty for forgiveness and promised that in future the Paduan state should serve Venice as a defence against the Visconti. Gian Galeazzo, on the other hand, promised the restoration to Venice of Treviso and other towns that had been seized by the Carrara. The choice was difficult. The extension of Viscontian domination over the whole of the Veronese and Paduan territories would make Milan an exceedingly formidable neighbour; but the distrust and hatred that the Venetians felt towards Francesco Carrara influenced their decision, so they allowed Padua to be seized by Gian Galeazzo, who imprisoned Francesco and his son Francesco Novello. The latter, however, escaped from Asti, and managed to make his way by Provence to Marseille, Genoa, Pisa, and Florence, whence *via* Ancona and Croatia after many adventures he reached Bavaria. With a few German mercenaries he then made a sudden and vigorous raid on Padua, and having entered the city at night by means of the bed of the river (Bacchiglione) was welcomed by the Paduans.

Venice had meanwhile changed sides, for Gian Galeazzo's

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

audacious ambitions had begun to excite fear and hostility in many quarters, and the Florentines and Bolognese had induced the Venetians to join them in their long and desperate struggle with the Milanese. Then a peace, signed at Genoa in 1392, confirmed Carrara as lord of Padua, but under the sovereignty of Milan. This peace, as was to be expected, proved merely a temporary truce. The ever more insatiable land-hunger and the boundless ambitions of Gian Galeazzo, emboldened by his successful purchase from 'Emperor' Wenzel of the ducal title, drew still closer together the allied cities, to which now Mantua was added, having been most unjustifiably attacked by the Milanese tyrant. In spite, however, of all the brave efforts of the League, in defence of which our countryman Sir John Hawkwood was employed by the Florentines, the cunning Visconti continued to be favoured in a wonderful manner by the goddess of fortune—or, as was popularly believed, by Satan himself. His *condottiere* Dal Verme beat and nearly captured Sir John and chased back to Germany the 'Emperor' Ruprecht, whom the Florentines rather meanly had invited to invade Italy. Bologna next fell,<sup>1</sup> and a great Milanese army was assembled to assault Florence.

But death proved stronger than the fickle goddess. Gian Galeazzo suddenly died—perhaps of the plague—and his dowager-duchess (daughter of Bernabò) proved an incapable regent during the minority of the two youths who succeeded their father. When, however, she was attacked by Carrara of Padua she rather cleverly appealed to Venice, knowing its old grudge against Padua, and Venice once more changed sides, hoping at last to satiate its long-nourished hatred and jealousy. Nor was its hope frustrated, for Padua was taken by Venetian troops, and Francesco (Novello), together with his son Jacopo, was sent to Venice, where soon after, accused, perhaps justly, of connivance with certain Venetian nobles in

<sup>1</sup> During most of the century it had been an object of fierce contention between the Visconti, the Popes, and the powerful family of the Pepoli. In 1401, that is before Gian Galeazzo mastered it, Giovanni Bentivoglio had been chosen 'principe.' He was slain, but the city soon ejected the Milanese and was ruled for a considerable time by Bentivogli.



## VENICE (1300-1400)

a plot to overthrow the Republic, they were both strangled (1404). The annexation of Padua marks the beginning of a new phase in the history of Venice. Henceforth she is to be the capital of Venetia—a Venetia that will stretch from the Isonzo to the Adda, and from the Alps nearly to the Po—as well as being the Queen of the Mediterranean and the metropolis of Istrian and Dalmatian and Levantine colonies, of Candia and Cyprus and Negropont and the Morea, and many other provinces and islands and cities.

## CHAPTER VI

### LITERATURE (1300-1400)

THE object of these chapters on Literature and Art is twofold. Firstly, I wish to show how certain great writers and artists fit, so to speak, into the history of their times. Secondly, I shall endeavour to point out the main characteristics and the value of some of the most important literary and artistic products of the period, assuming—rightly or wrongly—that such works, being monuments of the higher life of a people, are for us often quite as valuable as even the fullest and ablest contemporary accounts of political occurrences. It would be beside my purpose to map out further than I have done in *Medieval Italy* the course of Italian literature, which after the advent of Dante's great poem rolls onward like a mighty river, ever broadened and deepened by the affluence of innumerable tributaries. I shall therefore in the present chapter not attempt to give any full list of writers or to agglomerate unimportant biographical and bibliographical details,<sup>1</sup> but shall select a few great writers—some, of course, much greater than others—and, after showing the connexion of their lives with contemporary events, shall try to explain what it is that has made their works heirlooms for all succeeding ages—κτῆματα ἐς αἰεί.

If asked to name the greatest Italian writers of the 14th century one would not hesitate to select the three Tuscans who form the Triumvirate of the Trecento—Dante, Petrarca, and Boccaccio<sup>2</sup>—and these three will form our main subject; but I shall first make mention of several other authors, all

<sup>1</sup> See Lists of Artists and Writers at end of volume.

<sup>2</sup> Boccaccio being the Lepidus.

## · LITERATURE (1300-1400)

Tuscans, most of them Florentines, who exercised a lasting influence, some of them by their personality as well as by their literary work. These are—Dino Compagni, Cino da Pistoia, the translator of the *Fioretti*, the three Villani, Sacchetti the novelist and poet, and St. Catharine of Siena.<sup>1</sup>

The chief work of Dino, his *Cronaca* (history of his own times), gives a vivid account of the disastrous feuds that raged in Florence in the age of Dante. Like Dante he was a 'White' and was Gonfalonier and Prior, and for some time an exile. His style is very dramatic, and his leading characters, such as Boniface VIII and Henry VII, are vivid portraits.<sup>2</sup> Cino of Pistoia, lyric poet and erudite jurisconsult, was of the Parte Nera. He too was banished, and like Dante, whose friend he was, he veered over to the Ghibelline side and hailed Henry as the Saviour of Italy. Among his best known poems are—his answer to Dante's first sonnet; his verses on the death of Beatrice; his many lyrics in honour of his loved Selvaggia; his canzone on the death of Henry VII. Later (c. 1330) we hear of him at the court of Henry's great adversary, King Robert of Naples.

The collection of affectingly naïve and beautiful stories<sup>3</sup> known as the *Fioretti di San Francesco* (The Little Flowers of St. Francis) is an early Trecento translation, in very simple and admirable Tuscan prose, of a Latin original probably composed by a certain Frate Ugolino, who seems to have lived some 30 years after the death of the Saint, during the pontificate of Alexander IV (c. 1255). The graceful ease with which the language moves offers as striking a contrast to the prose of Dante as the prose of Addison offers to that of Milton,

<sup>1</sup> One should mention also Marco Polo, who was captured at Curzola and wrote his famous book of Eastern travels (called *Il Milione*) in a Genoese prison. The original was probably in French (or dialect), and the Italian translator is unknown.

<sup>2</sup> The *Cronaca* has been questioned (by Gaspari, Burckhardt, and others), but the doubt seems unfounded. He often mentions himself as a leading member of the Signoria which finally submitted to Charles of Valois and Boniface.

<sup>3</sup> Including the 'Sermon to the Birds,' 'Brother Wolf,' 'True Happiness,' etc.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

and in this respect (though in no other !) the *Fioretti* prelude the *Decameron* and Sacchetti's *Novelle*. The history (*Cronaca*) of Florence by Giovanni Villani I have had frequent occasion to mention and to use, and have told <sup>1</sup> how he was first induced to begin his great work by what he saw at Rome during the Jubilee of 1300, and how the last unfinished sentence of the book seems to show that he died of the *Morte Nera* in 1348. His Chronicle was continued by his brother Matteo (who died, also of the plague, in 1363) and his nephew Filippo, who brought it down to the year 1364. As a dignified and trustworthy historian Giovanni Villani is almost comparable with Thucydides ; but his style has none of the charm and power of the Athenian, and in the treatment of the legendary portion of his subject (for he goes back to the Tower of Babel) his critical acumen is by no means Thucydidean.

Sacchetti was Boccaccio's junior by about 20 years. His *Three Hundred Novels* (of which rather more than 200 have survived) have no such framework as the *Decameron*, but are arranged loosely in groups according to subject or recounter. They contain a great deal of light and low comedy and nothing that is comparable with the art and grace of the best of Boccaccio's stories, but, on the other hand, are without his pretentiousness and mock-solemnity and are at times vigorous and amusing (see an example given on p. 85). Some of his light pastoral poetry is exceedingly pretty. As poet and as politician he is connected with the history of his times, for during the Ciompi riot he greeted Salvestro de' Medici with a sonnet ; then, veering to the gale, he welcomed the new Government with a *canzone*, and in 1384 was elected Prior,<sup>2</sup> and was later a Podestà in various Tuscan cities. He is said to have died, like the two Villani, of the plague (c. 1400).

The personality and writings of St. Catharine of Siena have been already slightly sketched when, in the chapter on Rome, we were noting the remarkable influence that she exercised on the vacillation of Gregory XI and the fury of Urban VI.

<sup>1</sup> See *Medieval Italy*, p. 485.

<sup>2</sup> His brother, not so sagacious, was executed for sedition in 1379.



## LITERATURE (1300-1400)

Having thus touched briefly on some of the other writers of the period I shall now consider at greater length the lives and works of Dante, Petrarca, and Boccaccio, merely premising that the association of these three names suggests contrasts rather than similarities in literary form, and that in regard to all that infinite realm which is invisible from the merely literary standpoint Dante stands immeasurably supreme.

### DANTE <sup>1</sup>

In 1300—the year of his Priorate—Dante was, as he tells us in the first verse of his great poem, midway on the journey of life, namely, 35 years of age. The main incidents of his life, public and private, up to the date of his exile, indeed up to the coming and the death of Henry VII, have been indicated in *Medieval Italy* and in the present volume, and the more important of his earlier works, especially the *Vita Nuova*—that wondrous revelation of his love for Beatrice—and the *De vulgari Eloquentia*, have been mentioned in connexion with the rise of the new school of poetry (*il dolce stil nuovo*) as well as in connexion with his determination to write of his sainted Lady ‘that which hath never yet been sung by any man.’ Moreover, the real nature of his political creed, as revealed by his *De Monarchia* rather than by his letters to Emperor Henry, has been noted (*Medieval Italy*, p. 495), and it has been shown that his poetic insight gave him vision of a Universal Empire very different from that dreamed of by Germanic ‘Caesars’ of his day, or of ours—a federation of peoples held together by the ties of affection and reverence towards a central authority, this central authority, according to Dante, being the double sun of Church and State.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For further details perhaps I may refer to my *Selections from the Inferno*, published by the Oxford Press in 1874. This little volume, though it contains misprints, and statements for which, after 44 years, I decline responsibility, perhaps deserves mention, because it was probably (as I am told by Dr. Paget Toynbee) the “first book on Dante published by any English University, and the first of a long line of Dante books issued by the Clarendon Press.” Since 1874 very much has been done to render less poignant the sarcasm of Voltaire: *La réputation de Dante s'affermira toujours parcequ'on ne le lit guère.*

<sup>2</sup> The *De Monarchia*—so much maturer than the *Convito* (or *Convivio*), and

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

It may be remembered <sup>1</sup> how it came to pass that Dante, after holding office as one of the six Priors during two summer months of 1300, was sent, in 1301, on an embassy <sup>2</sup> to Rome to protest against Pope Boniface's evil policy of inviting Charles of Valois to Italy, and how when, early in 1302, he reached Siena on his homeward journey he heard that his house and property had been plundered by the French mercenaries and the Neri, and soon afterwards how a satellite of Charles, Cante de' Gabbrielli, had been made Podestà and had issued a summons against him and about 600 other 'disaffected Guelfs.' Then followed the verdict of a heavy fine and banishment; and a second sentence condemned him to be burnt alive if found in Florentine territory.

At first Dante was at Verona.<sup>3</sup> He then associated with the exiled Ghibellines, who, after meeting at various places in the Apennines, took up their headquarters at Arezzo; and here he formed a lasting friendship with Uguccone della

so much saner than the extravagant letters to Henry—must have been written, it seems to me, after the death of Henry (1313), long after Dante had begun to shun Ghibelline imperialists and to 'make a party for himself,' as his ancestor Cacciaguida predicts in the *Paradiso* (xvii, 69).

<sup>1</sup> See Index to *Medieval Italy*; and under 'Dante,' 'Corso Donati,' 'Boniface VIII,' and 'Charles of Valois' in Index to this volume; see also p. 608.

<sup>2</sup> Boniface detained the envoys in Rome by trifling excuses, and finally dismissed them with a haughty "Humble yourselves before me! Submit!" Two of them then returned, but Dante remained. Dante's absence from Florence has been unreasonably doubted, though the visit to Boniface is mentioned by the contemporary chroniclers, except Giov. Villani. The only shadow of proof of presence in Florence that I have ever discovered is the *di Fiorenza partir ti conviene* of *Par.* xvii, but here to 'part' evidently means 'to be banished.' Dino Compagni, who was in office during these months, states distinctly that Dante 'was ambassador at Rome,' and connects this with the fact that 'messer Carlo' caused the 600 to be banished in April 1302. The vivid description of the pilgrim crowd at the Jubilee seems to prove presence at Rome in 1300. See *Inf.* xviii, 29, and *Purg.* ii, 98. Note that this Jubilee year—the year of that Priorate from which Dante says all his misfortunes began—is the year of the action of his poem.

<sup>3</sup> In *Par.* xvii it is predicted that the 'courtesy of the Great Lombard' would offer him the 'earliest refuge.' Can Grande was in 1300, as Dante himself tells us, only nine years of age, and this 'gran Lombardo' was probably his elder brother, Bartolomeo (1301–1304), during whose reign the tragedy of Romeo and Juliet (woven by Da Porto into an old legend) perhaps took place at Verona—therefore possibly while Dante was there.

## LITERATURE (1300-1400)

Faggiuola, who was at this time a Ghibelline free-lance and later (as has been recounted in other chapters) became famous as the lord of Pisa and Lucca. During these years the first cantos of the *Inferno* were written.<sup>1</sup>

It was not long before Dante learnt to loathe the 'evil company and frivolous' in which he found himself, and to despise the petty spirit that actuated his fellow-exiles. He began to 'form a party for himself.' Moreover, he began to cherish the hope that it was not by force of arms that he would return and see once more that 'fairest and most renowned daughter of Rome, Fiorenza,' and 'all things that he had so dearly loved,' but that 'both the one party and the other would have such hunger' for him that he would be recalled to honour in his native city. And so, after Boniface VIII and his short-lived successor, Benedict XI, had been followed by the 'cunning Gascon,' Clement V—who shortly afterwards established the Papal See at Avignon, thus earning a fiery pit in the *Inferno*—Dante, losing all hope in Popes and in Princes, withdrew into solitude, and wandered about alone from place to place, in his lonely retreats and on his lonely journeyings gradually building up that 'sacred poem to which both heaven and earth had set their hand,' and which 'for so many years had made him lean.' Traces of his wanderings are yet perceptible, but they are few and faint, and one needs much imagination and no little credulity in order to follow trustingly the connected stories told by writers such as Troya or Ampère.

A legal document proves his presence in Padua on August 27, 1306. Here he was the guest of Giotto, who was painting the chapel of the Arena. In *Purg.* viii Conrad Malaspina predicts that his father, the Marquis Morello Malaspina, will in seven years' time show such kindness to Dante that his 'courteous opinion [of Malaspina hospitality] shall in the middle of his

<sup>1</sup> The *Inferno* was dedicated by Dante, it is said, to Uguccone, the *Purgatorio* to Marquis Malaspina, and the *Paradiso* (before its completion at Ravenna) to Can Grande of Verona. Uguccone is probably the 'Greyhound' of *Inf.* i, and the DUX of *Purg.* xxxiii, 48.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

head be nailed.' This confirms the statement that about 1307 Dante was guest of the Malaspina in Lunigiana (the region of the *Lunai portus*, or the bay of La Spezia), and it makes us prone to accept as genuine the oft-doubted *Letter of Frate Ilario*, which asserts that Dante came on his wanderings, unrecognized, to the 'Monastery of the Raven'—the relics of

which may yet be seen near the mouth of the river Magra, between La Spezia and Viareggio—and when asked what he wanted, 'he slowly turned his head,' says the Frate, 'towards me and the other brothers and exclaimed, *La pace!*' Moreover, it is said, he consigned to Ilario a copy of his *Inferno*, to be forwarded to Ugucione, and when the Frate was surprised at seeing that the poem was in the

vulgar tongue he explained that he first chose Latin,<sup>1</sup> but 'threw aside that delicate lyre and attuned another more befitting the ear of moderns.'

From the Lunigiana he probably went to the Casentino—where his friends the Conti Guidi had various castles—and shortly afterwards (1309-1310) was probably at Paris,<sup>2</sup> and possibly in the Netherlands; nay, it has even been asserted

<sup>1</sup> The (very poor) Latin hexameters cited by Frate Ilario as Dante's first attempt may be found in Boccaccio's *Life of Dante*.

<sup>2</sup> His mention of the 'Rue du Fouarre' (*Par. x, 137*) apparently corroborates this assertion (cf. *Purg. xi, 81*; *xx, 52*). The picture of the Flemish dykes near Bruges (*Inf. xv, 4*) seems painted from nature. It seems hardly probable that he visited Avignon—the den of the papal Simoniac whom he had lately condemned to Malebolge—but the vivid picture that he gives us of the wondrous cemetery of Arles, with its innumerable sarcophagi, must surely be from the original (*Inf. ix, 112*).





## LITERATURE (1300-1400)

that he came to England and—studied theology at Oxford! He seems to have been still in France when the report reached him of the intended 'descent' of Henry of Luxemburg. At this news he hurried, I think, back to Italy, and was probably present at Milan when Henry received the Iron Crown, and soon afterwards returned to the Casentino; for it was *sub fonte Sarni*, i.e. probably from the castle of the Guidi at Romena or at Poppi, not far from the source of the Arno (nor far from Camaldoli and La Verna—places so sacred to White Benedictines and to Franciscans—and close to the battlefield of Campaldino, where Dante himself had fought as a young man), that he indited his furious tirade against the Florentines and his extravagant epistle to Henry.<sup>1</sup>

After the collapse of his Imperialistic enthusiasms Dante betook himself again to solitary wanderings. It may have been during this period that he found refuge for a time at the monastery of Fonte Avellana, beneath the huge 'hump' (*gibbo*) of Monte Catria, a very lofty Apennine peak<sup>2</sup> between Arezzo and Ancona. In this beautiful and secluded spot he probably spent the autumn of 1313, during the summer of which year Henry VII had died near Siena; and we can imagine him often gazing from that lofty ridge towards his native land, for he was still to harbour for many years the hope, of which he tells us in his *Paradiso*, that he would some day return in triumph as poet, and receive the cap (the poet's hood, or the laurel crown) at the font of his baptism—that is, in his *bel San Giovanni*, the Florentine Baptistry.

<sup>1</sup> *Med. Italy*, p. 495, and for Campaldino, *ibid.*, p. 517. The Casentino is full of Dantesque memories, some of which will be revived in the minds of Dante-students by the mention of Archiano (and Buonconte), Fonte Branda, Romena, Adam of Brescia, Monte Falterona and the course of the Arno (*Purg.* xiv). Dante's beautiful 'Canzone Montanina' was written in the Casentino.

<sup>2</sup> So high (c. 5600 feet) that 'the thunder sounds far below,' says the Ravenna ascetic, San Damiano, who in *Par.* xxi describes the site of the hermitage, which he (c. 1050) made famous. The annals of the monastery, says Troya, relate Dante's sojourn. (If he wrote *Par.* xxi here, the visit must have been at least five years later.) He was also (c. 1313) in the neighbourhood of Gubbio, well known in connexion with St. Francis—and Brother Wolf.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

And we may note here in passing that, before he wrote this passage (about 1318), he had refused to receive the laurel crown at Bologna, and that probably even the Roman Capitol would have failed to attract him, as not many years later it attracted Petrarca. Florence was for him—what for Petrarca it was not—his only *patria*—that which alone could ‘quiet all his longings.’ The difference between the patriotism of the two poets is clearly indicated by those well-known words of Dante: *il mio bel San Giovanni*—and those of Petrarca: *Italia mia!*

And yet when Dante’s friend, Uguccione, lord of Pisa and Lucca, inflicted the crushing defeat on the Florentine Guelphs at Montecatini, in 1315, the poet’s national enthusiasm seemingly prevailed over his love for Florence, and he hailed Uguccione as the promised Deliverer and the great Leader of Italy and refused with disdain the humiliating terms offered to the exiles by the defeated Florentines, namely that they should walk in penitential robes through the streets of Florence. ‘What!’ he exclaimed, ‘can I not from every spot on earth behold the sun and the stars? I will never enter Florence but by the road of honour.’

Meantime Can Grande had become lord of Verona, and about 1317 the wanderer found again a refuge at the court of the Scaligeri. The young prince, of whose natural gifts and munificence Dante speaks so highly in the *Paradiso*, seems to have treated him with kindness and generosity. But the gay palace, with its *compagnia malvagia e scempia*, ill-suited the stern and meditative poet, who found himself in the midst of jesters and revellers. Although his sons Pietro and Jacopo joined him and his friend Uguccione, expelled from Lucca, had become a guest and a *condottiere* at Verona, he began again to experience

Come sa di sale  
Lo pane altrui, e come è duro calle  
Lo scendere e ’l salir per l’altrui scale,

and after some three years, perhaps indignant at some affront or perhaps utterly outwearied by the frivolities and flummeries of court life, he withdrew to Ravenna, whither he was invited

## LITERATURE (1300-1400)

by Guido da Polenta—nephew (or cousin) of that Francesca da Rimini whose name ever revives in our memory a picture as of a 'lily growing in the mouth of Hell.' At Ravenna, wandering among the great pine-trees of Classe and where, amidst water-lily-covered pools, the basilica of S. Apollinare stands in solitary majesty, and along that Adriatic shore where 'the Po descends with all its tributary streams in search of peace,' Dante too found peace at last. It was here that he composed the most divinely inspired portion of his 'sacred poem'—the conclusion of the *Paradiso*; and here he died. He had been sent by Guido on an embassy to Venice (it was while Soranzo was Doge, in 1321), and on the journey through the malarious swamp-lands he seems to have caught a fever. For some months he lingered, but on September 14 the summons came for his spirit 'to go hence to behold the glory of its Lady, who gloriously gazeth on the face of Him Who is through all ages blessed.'

Let us now turn from his personal and political experiences to the vast world of his imaginative creation. Here I shall try to use the simplest and most direct words possible, for any attempt to expatiate and rhapsodize would be ridiculous. Something has been said already, in my former volume and in this, about Dante's earlier works of imagination—his *Vita Nuova* and its *canzoni* and *sonetti*. Now that we have entered the 14th century it is the *Divina Commedia*<sup>1</sup> which alone will occupy our attention. The poem consists of three *Cantiche*—the *Inferno*, the *Purgatorio*, and the *Paradiso*. Each *Cantica* contains 33 *Canti*, and the *Inferno* has an extra, introductory, *Canto*. Each of these 100 *Canti* is of about 145 lines, and as the poem boasts of no fewer volumes of comment than the number of its lines, it is easy to calculate roughly the ratio between the amount of possible annotation and the following brief remarks.

<sup>1</sup> Dante calls it a 'Commedia' in *Inf.* xvi and xxi, and in his letter to Can Grande he explains that it is because the poem ends happily and is written in the 'vulgar tongue, which women and children speak.' He modestly subordinates it to Virgil's *alta Tragedia* (*Inf.* xx). The epithet 'Divina' was bestowed on it by later admirers.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

We have already noted that the action of the *Divine Comedy* begins in 1300—the year when Dante was ‘midway upon the path’ of human life—the year of that Priorate from which he dates all his misfortunes. That he began to write the poem soon after his banishment is evident from various passages,<sup>1</sup> and the first (introductory) Canto gives us a vivid allegory of the mental and moral condition in which he found himself at this momentous crisis. The savage forest in the dark valley where his path is lost and the three beasts<sup>2</sup> that at the base of the Mount Delectable obstruct his way symbolize his desperate state, intellectual and moral, and the three chief obstacles to his attainment of that peace and happiness for which his spirit sighed. As was the case with Boëthius, his ‘sainted Teacher,’ it was Philosophy that came to console him—in the form of Virgil, that ‘master and author’ of his whom he regarded not only as the ‘honour and light of all other poets,’ but as a ‘fountain whence is spread abroad’ the wide river of universal human knowledge. Virgil tells him that he must ‘take another road,’ for this malignant papal wolf will never let him pass, but will continue her ravennings ‘till the Greyhound shall come’—Ugucione or Can Grande, as we have seen—who shall chase her through every city back to Hell. The Roman poet then offers to show Dante that ‘other road’ and to guide him through the abyss of the Inferno and to the summit of the Mount of Purgatory, where he will consign him to a ‘spirit more worthy.’ This spirit is Beatrice. She had already come down from her throne in the highest Heaven to the luminous circle above the first descent to Hell (where the great poets and philosophers of

<sup>1</sup> E.g. Ciacco’s allusion to Charles of Valois (*Inf.* vi). Boccaccio gives a story that the first seven cantos were written before exile and the attempt was given up in despair and then renewed. But this is evidently a fiction.

<sup>2</sup> The ‘light and nimble’ leopard with its gaily spotted skin, is Sensual Desire (and Florence); the lion, ‘with head aloft and with furious hunger,’ is Wrath and Violence (and France); the she-wolf, ‘laden with all ravennings in her leanness,’ is Malice and Fraud (and the Roman Papacy). These three classes of vices (mainly Aristotelian) determine the circles and punishments of the Inferno (see *Inf.* xi), in the lowest pit of which malicious traitors and Satan himself are imbedded in thick-ribbed ice.



## LITERATURE (1300-1400)

antiquity 'live without torment but without hope') and had begged Virgil to succour Dante; and from the Earthly Paradise on the summit of the Purgatorial Mountain, higher than which Virgil cannot guide him (philosophy and science being only able to attain earthly felicity), Dante is drawn upward by the celestial light reflected in the eyes of Beatrice and with her passes through the nine concentric Heavens, in which he beholds scenes of ineffable grandeur and loveliness and holds converse with many of the radiant spirits<sup>1</sup> and at last reaches the Empyrean, where around a lake of golden light the thrones of the Blessed rise tier above tier, forming, as it were, a mighty Rose with innumerable snow-white petals. Here Beatrice leaves Dante—Theology, or Intellectual Knowledge of the Divine,<sup>2</sup> being unable to conduct him into the very presence of God. She reassumes her seat on the throne that she had left, and as Dante earnestly gazes on the face of his Lady, enthroned in the highest Heaven, she smiles—and the prayer with which his *Vita Nuova* ends is fulfilled. But he would fain gaze even on God Himself. To help him to attain this supreme felicity St. Bernard addresses a prayer of wondrous sublimity to the Virgin Mother, and Dante is vouchsafed the Beatific Vision. Then on his mind there smites a flash, as of lightning, withering all the power of high imagination; but at the same moment will and desire gain all they wished, and like a smoothly turning wheel move swiftly round, impelled by that 'Love which moves the sun and the other stars.'<sup>3</sup>

To touch, however briefly, on the immense subjects of Dante's ethics, metaphysics, and theology—to give even the

<sup>1</sup> The spirits of the blest have their real, undistinguished existence in the Empyrean, but appear as 'preludes' in the Nine Heavens, where they are differentiated according to the various virtues.

<sup>2</sup> In his letter to Can Grande, Dante says that his poem is 'polysensuous,' and that it has a literal and an allegoric ('anagogic and moral') sense. Beatrice is intensely human, even in the Empyrean, but she symbolizes that *scientia rerum divinarum* which is the highest knowledge attainable by man. In *Purg.* vi Virgil calls her 'the lamp betwixt truth and the intellect.'

<sup>3</sup> Note in passing that each of the three Cantiche ends with the word *stelle*. It is one of numberless evidences of the wondrous symmetry of the poem, each stone having been shaped to fill its exact place in the huge edifice.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

most shadowy outline of his system of rewards and punishments or that of the Nine (or rather Ten) Heavens—to say even a few words on a few of the almost innumerable passages which are pre-eminently conspicuous for beauty, or sublimity, or human interest, or historic associations—is here impossible. I shall have to content myself with some remarks on the topography of Dante's world of spirits, and a few observations of a general character.

The *Inferno* is conceived by Dante as in shape like an inverted cone (or conch—*conca*, as he calls it in *Inf.* ix). The apex of this inverted cone is at the centre of the earth, where Satan is fixed in the midst of the vast frozen lake formed by the infernal rivers. The size of the circular pit covered over by the surface of the earth must be enormous, seeing that Jerusalem stands directly over its centre, and the Gate by which the poets enter seems to have been somewhere in Italy—perhaps near Lake Avernus. They bear to the left as they descend and make one full spiral revolution before they reach the bottom, having crossed nine circles, some of them consisting of several fosses or regions, each with its appropriate horrors.<sup>1</sup> The centre of gravity is passed by a difficult gymnastic feat performed by Virgil as he clings to the shaggy flank of Lucifer, and a whole day is spent in toiling upwards to the surface of the southern hemisphere. Very early on Easter morn they issue forth into the sunlight<sup>2</sup> at the base of the Mount of Purgatory, which forms an island in the centre of the great southern ocean, the exact antipodes of Mount Sion in Jerusalem.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The minute details and exact measurements given by Dante (*e.g.* of the circumferences of the circles, the size of the giants, etc.) certainly form a contrast to the 'vague sublimity' of Milton; but Macaulay, in his celebrated Essay, writes as if the poem consisted of the *Inferno* only. Nothing in Milton gives one the sensation of vastness and suggests infinity as does many a passage in the *Paradiso*—which, by the by, Macaulay asserts to be 'far inferior' to the rest of the poem!

<sup>2</sup> The descent is begun on Good Friday afternoon. The allegory is plain. The action of the whole poem lasts ten days.

<sup>3</sup> A mediæval legend (see *Inf.* xxvi) relates that Odysseus was shipwrecked on this island, and thus met the death by drowning foretold to him by Teiresias. The mountain-island was thrown up, like a mole-hill, in the midst of the ocean by Satan when he fell from heaven and pierced the earth to the centre.

## LITERATURE (1300-1400)

Across this ocean, from the mouth of the Tiber, arrive the spirits of those who are destined to pass through Purgatory on their way to Heaven. The vessels that convey them are piloted and impelled each by an angel standing at the helm and fanning the air with immortal snow-white wings.

Cleansed by dew from the grime of the *Inferno*, Dante with Virgil passes through Antipurgatory and arrives at a Gate guarded by a majestic angel seated on the diamond threshold sword in hand. On Dante's forehead with the sword's point he marks seven P's to signify the seven sins (*peccata*) punished in the seven terraces of Purgatory ; which marks will disappear one by one as Dante ascends from terrace to terrace up to the Terrestrial Paradise.<sup>1</sup>

In the *Paradiso* ordinary conditions of time and space are supposed to be eliminated, and the art with which Dante excites in us (so to speak) sensations of the unconditioned is very wonderful. But what is beyond the realm of the senses is only to be intimated, not described. Most admirable, therefore, is the device by which he makes the spirits of the blest, whose real home is the Emyrean, appear as splendours reflected, as it were, in the mirrors of the various lower Heavens, and relate with human voice their thoughts and memories and celestial joys, giving evidence of their emotions by the pulsations of their dazzling radiance.

And here let us note that in the *Inferno* we have pure darkness made visible by lurid gleams of infernal fire—scarce a trace of natural colour or of natural life—grim, terrific crags and precipices and bleeding trees—livid marshes—rivers of boiling pitch or blood—enormous icefields—all eternally overhung by an inky pall of Cimmerian darkness—an *aer*

<sup>1</sup> Allegory often becomes wearisome, but in Dante's allegories and symbolism there is always a beauty, or a grandeur, and a deep meaning and an exquisite appropriateness, which render them incomparable. The symbols of the diamond threshold, the three stairs of the Gate—one of white and polished marble, one of dark and calcined stone 'cracked lengthwise and athwart,' one of blood-red porphyry—and the two keys, one of silver and one of gold, are used here in a way that surely moves one very much more deeply than most of Milton's imagery—though Milton sometimes overwhelms us by his grand effects.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

*senza stelle* through which for ever trembles the one terrible monotone of eternal anguish. In the *Purgatorio* we have the white radiance of eternity broken into colour by contact with the world of nature, and the monotone of infinite anguish dissolved into diverse notes, which form the dissonances and harmonies of transient human pain and human aspiration. This part of the poem is therefore full of the most varied and intense human pathos—not the terrifying pathos of eternal despair, as in the *Inferno*, but that of suffering and happiness combined—and onwards from the opening scene, when the poets issue forth from the dark cavern and find themselves beneath the southern constellations a little before dawn on Easter morning, we have a succession of the most lovely and exquisitely coloured pictures of land and sea and sky. In the *Paradiso* there is less colour. We have occasionally pictures such as the fiery-red cross of Mars, and the nine circles symbolizing the angelic hierarchy, which seem differentiated by slight rainbow colours, as is also the case with the three equal circles by which Dante strives vainly to intimate the Beatific Vision; but the main effects are produced by gradations and pulsations of pure radiance unstained by the ‘dome of many-coloured glass.’

People sometimes condemn Dante to his own *Inferno* for having condemned other people to it. But any one who writes an *Inferno* must find people to put into it, and one need scarcely suppose that Dante was such a blasphemous idiot as to wish to seat himself in God’s throne of judgment, or to wish us to accept his verdicts—except as artistically correct. His poem is, as Carlyle says, ‘no poor, splenetic, impotent, terrestrial libel,’ and the fact that in many cases we cannot accept his verdict <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Not because we ourselves would pass verdicts, but because Dante’s verdicts often do not satisfy our common sense, nor even sometimes the dogmata of the Angelic Doctor. Thus, in spite of Dante’s *De Monarchia* or his hatred of treachery, why is the ‘Brutus who drove the Tarquin forth’ in Limbo with Caesar and Socrates, while ‘the noble Brutus’ (regarded as a Harmodios in the Renaissance) writhes in the mouth of Lucifer? Why is Dante’s *caro e buono e paterno* teacher, Brunetto Latini, who taught him ‘how a man becomes eternal,’ condemned to the most terrible fiery torment in Hell, while that other teacher, Boëthius, who was possibly a pagan (see



## LITERATURE (1300-1400)

does not seem to affect either one's reverence for his poetic genius or one's respect for his character. That he was—in later years anyhow—a stern, proud, uncompanionable man is not to be gainsaid, for he himself allows the fact, and in his poem foretells his own condemnation to the lowest circle of Purgatory, where the proud are grievously punished. But self-conceit, stupid arrogance, sensuality, cunning, insincerity . . . for all such odious things he had the deepest contempt. Indeed he seems to me to have been one of the truest, the most *sincere*, of men.<sup>1</sup> They who believe him to have been capable only of a poet's hate of hate are, I think, always those who know him only—or almost only—as the poet of the *Inferno*. Such people little dream how in the *Paradiso* he reveals, as perhaps no other poet has ever done, the true nature—the beauty and the power—of love, both human and divine.

It is not as politician, theologian, or a metaphysician, that Dante has left us anything of great value. That is, his creeds are of no more use to us than his scientific theories. But behind this veil of formal beliefs, sprawled over by grotesque abortions of medieval scholasticism, rare and precious things are hidden, and at times he reveals to us ideals and offers us fundamental truths<sup>2</sup> which prove for us inestimable—veritable 'angels' bread.'

*Medieval Italy*, p. 179) is a 'sainted soul' in Heaven? And what are we to say to old Cavalcanti and Farinata in Hell with Boniface and Clement, the brutal Charles d'Anjou in Purgatory, and Robert Guiscard, Orlando, Ripheus the Trojan, and the German Kaiser Henry in Paradise, where he has a throne reserved for him in the White Rose?

<sup>1</sup> This is, I find, a subconscious reminiscence of what Carlyle has said in his *Hero as Poet*. In spite of all later erudition and eloquence, and in spite of Carlyle's inaccuracies, what he wrote on Dante's genius remains perhaps the best ever written.

<sup>2</sup> Although he mentions the *Timaeus* (of which an early Latin version existed) and seems to have known something of the *Phaedrus*, he apparently never grasped the Platonic philosophy as a system. *Formaliter* he was a disciple of Aristotle—*il Maestro di color che sanno*, as he calls him—but though he adopted the formulae and classifications of medieval Aristotelianism, he was at heart a Platonist, as every true poet must be, and all the 'angels' bread' that he offers us is of grain grown in the realms of Idealism.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

Revelation is indeed a method by which Dante's genius attains some of its most singular effects. All lovers of his poem know well that on every page one is almost certain to discover—perhaps embedded in a political diatribe or an abstruse theological dissertation—some expression which thrills one like a flash of lightning and illuminates, as it were, the whole domain of one's consciousness, revealing suddenly vast expanses of thought and feeling and stamping the scene indelibly on the memory. And one knows well how with a few simple words—most surprisingly, incredibly, few and simple—Dante has the power, more than Homeric, of suddenly revealing to us a scene, an action, or a person, so that we seem to see the actual reality and are affected as by what in nature is overwhelmingly grand, or inexpressibly beautiful, or irresistibly pathetic. It is, of course, not the few simple words that effect all this. It is not done by word-painting, but by an act of revelation. Dante has gradually led us, so to speak, up to some mountain height, and as the prospect suddenly bursts upon our view he merely says 'Behold!'

### PETRARCA

As I have done in the case of Dante, I shall first try to show how the life of Petrarca fits into the history of his times; then I shall consider his works and add a few remarks on his genius and influence. He has been frequently mentioned in former chapters, especially in connexion with Avignon Popes, with King Robert of Naples, and with Cola di Rienzo. The following biographical sketch will enable us to view the various incidents in their proper perspective.

The poet's father, Ser Petracco,<sup>1</sup> a Florentine notary (native of Incisa), was exiled as a White Guelph in 1302 and, like Dante, took refuge in Arezzo. Here on July 20, 1304, Francesco was born.<sup>2</sup> Soon afterwards the mother, allowed by the Florentine

<sup>1</sup> Changed by the poet into 'Petrarca.'

<sup>2</sup> The next day (July 21) the exiles made a vain attempt to enter Florence. It is not known whether Dante joined in the attempt. If not, he was very likely in Arezzo when Petrarca was born. Their lives overlapped for 17 years; those of Shakespeare and Milton for 8.

## LITERATURE (1300-1400)

Government to return to Incisa (in the Valdarno, below the slopes of Pratomagno, on which Vallombrosa lies), trudged thither on foot, while the child—*non sine dis animosus infans*—‘dangled from a knotty stick laid across her shoulder’—so says the biographer Costero; ‘and by a hair’s breadth she escaped being drowned together with her *robusto garzone* in crossing the Arno.’ Six years later we find the boy at Pisa with his father, and when the death of Henry VII ruined the hopes of the exiles the family migrated to Avignon, where Clement V had established the papal court. Here, or rather at Carpentras, where Ser Petracco settled his family, Francesco continued his schooling under his old Pisan master Convenevoles of Prato, himself also a refugee. Then he was sent to a college at Montpellier and then to Bologna University. The ultimate object of all this education was the legal profession, and great was the wrath of old Petracco when he found that his son was spending his time and thoughts almost entirely on classical literature—especially on Virgil and Cicero—conduct probably encouraged *sub rosa* by the great Bolognese professor of jurisprudence, Cino of Pistoia, who was, as we know, still greater as a poet. In 1325 his father died and he settled at Avignon, devoting his energies to study, dress, and other diversions affected by the young dandies that fluttered round the papal court—the hideous state of which ‘Babylon’ and ‘Inferno’ he has described in language almost Dantesque.<sup>1</sup> He takes ‘minor orders’ in order to secure social status and some fat sinecure such as his fellow-student Giordano Colonna may have offered to procure him.<sup>2</sup>

On April 6, 1327, at an Easter service in the church of Ste-Claire at Avignon, he first beheld—so he tells us—that

<sup>1</sup> See, for instance, No. XIV of his Miscellaneous Sonnets, where with a vividness of imagery quite unusual with him he gives a picture of the luxury and lecheries of the Palais des Papes and adds: ‘in the midst is Beelzebub with bellows and fire and with the mirrors’—reminding one of some old fresco of Satan blowing up a fiery furnace in which the damned are writhing.

<sup>2</sup> See the Table of the Colonna, p. 22, and chapter on Rome. Giordano’s elder brother, Giovanni, afterwards Petrarca’s Maecenas, became a cardinal. In one of his *Trionfi* Petrarca calls him *il mio gran Colonnese*. He died of the plague in 1348, at Avignon.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

Laura in honour of whom he wrote almost every line of that *Canzoniere* which has made him so famous.

Who was this Laura of Petrarca's poems? Did she ever really exist in any such form as that which he has painted and intimated, or was she an imaginary ideal? These and other questions on a most interesting and perplexing subject have never been satisfactorily answered. It is impossible to discuss the matter fully here. I can only state the conviction towards which one seems to be led the more one studies Petrarca's life and writings, namely that, as in Dante's case, a real woman was idealized. The natures of the two poets were very different. That Dante loved the maiden Beatrice, 'the youngest of the angels,' tenderly and passionately surely none can doubt, but his strong and pure character enabled him, when she was lost to him by marriage and then by death, to reverence her as his Lady who deigned to descend from her throne in the Empyrean to guide him upwards from the earthly Paradise through all the spheres of Heaven. Petrarca's amorous, sentimental, susceptible, unstable nature—a strange, almost modern, medley of the ideal and the sensuous—chose Laura, whoever she may have been,<sup>1</sup> as the personification of that influence (that *Ewig-weibliche*) to which he had surrendered himself body and soul. For him, I think, various emotions—sensual, sentimental and quasi-religious—were combined in

<sup>1</sup> Here are a few jottings which may help the reader to form an opinion. Abbé de Sade found in the baptismal registry of Avignon a 'Laura de Noves,' who may have married a Count de Sade. In what is possibly her tomb was found a medal bearing the letters M.L.M.J., which, we are assured, mean 'Madonna Laura morta jacet' (!); also a bit of parchment inscribed with a sonnet, which, we are told, must be by Petrarca—though good judges say it is beneath criticism. Other writers think that the original 'Laura' was a peasant girl, the mother of Petrarca's illegitimate son and daughter, of both of whom Petrarca was very fond. (All this was going on while Petrarca, a clerk in Holy Orders, was indulging in the luxury of woe and passion on account of a married woman—if we are to believe the Abbé.) The note by Petrarca (if by him) in his manuscript of Virgil touching the death of 'Laura' and her virtues seems to show that there was a real woman in the case. The job is to *chercher la femme*. One may note that such a passionate lover as is described in the *Canzoniere* would scarcely have absented himself so often on long travels, nor have buried himself contentedly among his books and manuscripts in Vaucluse.



## LITERATURE (1300-1400)

the thought of 'Laura' and concentrated on this idol of his imagination—the fair statue, so to speak, in which he had idealized the form and features of some woman, but which, in spite of all his passion, his woe, his self-humiliation, his remorse, and—one must add—his insults,<sup>1</sup> never stepped down from her pedestal into the embrace of her Pygmalion.

After Petrarca had arrived at the rubric of his *Vita Nuova*—if we may use the words here without desecration—he burnt his *Juvenilia* and, having provided himself with a Dulcinea, put spurs to Rosinante. Literary notoriety seems, however, to have been the real motive of his new quest rather than any such noble ambition as that of Dante. He set seriously to work on the *Canzoniere*, in which he meant to picture in minute detail every passing emotion of his enamoured heart. But he did not intend to pine in solitude. He made many influential acquaintances and travelled much, doubtless glad at times to get away from 'Babylon' and 'Beelzebub.' In 1329 or 1330 he was, it seems, in Belgium and France. On his return he is introduced by Giordano Colonna to his brother, the Cardinal, and to their father, the elder Stefano Colonna—brother to that famous Sciarra Colonna who had bearded Boniface VIII at Anagni in 1303 and who lately (1328) had crowned Ludwig the Bavarian in Rome and had exiled his own Guelf relatives.<sup>2</sup> At the palace of these Colonna refugees Petrarca meets, among other distinguished guests, Richard de Bury, Bishop of Durham. Then in 1333 he makes a grand tour, visiting Paris, Liège, Ghent, and Cologne, and is said to have got *fino sulle coste del mare britannico*—but on which side of the 'British Sea' is not stated. Meantime his Colonna friends had returned to Rome—for Ludwig and his Antipope had disappeared, and King Robert of Naples and the Avignon papal party had regained power there. But ere long the city was again devastated by the ferocious contests of Colonna and

<sup>1</sup> As we shall see, he calls her a Medusa and bitterly laments his slavery.

<sup>2</sup> For these episodes see *Medieval Italy*, p. 487, and the chapter on Rome in this volume, and the Table of the Colonna, p. 22. Ludwig and Sciarra had set up an Antipope at Rome. Though Petrarca hated John XXII he was on his side.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

Orsini, and Petrarca, who visited it in 1336, wrote a most vivid account of the lawless state of things.<sup>1</sup> Rome impressed him in a way that it did not impress Dante. When we think of him wandering (doubtless personally conducted by a strong escort) through the ruins of ancient Rome, we instinctively class him with some modern enthusiast—with Byron perhaps, or Goethe, or Gibbon—and we are suddenly conscious of the profound gulf that separates him from Dante not only as a ‘man of letters,’ but also as a patriot; for, though incomparably greater as poet, Dante, to whom Florence and *il bel San Giovanni* were apparently more than Rome and the Capitol, had no such vision as Petrarca had of a United Italy.

On his return from Rome Petrarca withdraws to a hamlet in a retired vale—Vaucluse—near Avignon. His classical enthusiasms having been fired by his visit to Rome, he now devotes his whole energies to an epic in Latin hexameters, hoping to rival the fame of Virgil. The nature and fate of this *magnum opus*, the *Africa*, we shall consider later.

On September 1, 1340, he received both from Paris and from Rome<sup>2</sup> an offer of public coronation as Laureate. As has been related elsewhere, he chose Rome and was crowned by the Senators on the Capitol, after having been examined at Naples—where Virgil lies buried—by the old King Robert, for whose learning he had the most profound reverence. The ceremony of coronation (February 1341) is mentioned several times in Petrarca’s letters of that period and in the *Epistola ad Posteror* of his old age; but he does not describe it, and the florid description that Gregorovius and others offer us, though derived from contemporary sources, is probably fictitious.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> He stayed with his friend Count Orso d’Anguillara (son-in-law of Stefano Colonna) at Capranica, whence he had to be escorted to Rome by 100 Colonna horsemen. From this time forward his one constant refrain was *Pace, Pace, Pace!*

<sup>2</sup> Petrarca, or his friends, had probably sent in an application to both cities simultaneously. For his ‘examination’ and coronation see chapters on Rome and Naples, and the Index. Count Orso, Petrarca’s friend, was now one of the two Senators of Rome.

<sup>3</sup> The fine Discourse held by Petrarca on this occasion was in 1874 discovered in the Magliabechiana Library at Florence. It is interesting to contrast it with D’Annunzio’s harangue on the Capitol in May 1915.

## LITERATURE (1300-1400)

At Avignon the old miser John XXII had been succeeded by the peace-loving, donnish, and convivial miller's son, Benedict XII. This Pope just at the time when Petrarca was being fêted at Rome was occupied with building a great portion of that enormous pile, the Palais des Papes, which overhangs the city and the Rhone like a thundercloud. Not long after the poet's return, on the death of Benedict, a very much more aristocratic and dignified personage ascended the papal throne—namely, Pierre de Beaufort, who called himself Clement the Sixth.

In the chapter on Rome the rise and fall of Cola di Rienzo has been fully related, and it may be remembered how, when the young adventurer first came to Avignon as a Roman envoy to Pope Clement, he probably met Petrarca, and how, strongly moved by the vision of a revived Roman Republic as a world-power, the poet enthusiastically supports the Last of the Tribunes,<sup>1</sup> and in 1347—when Cola is at the zenith of his power and his madness—sets out to join him at Rome, hoping perhaps to save him from his doom. But on the very day on which he leaves Avignon the terrible slaughter of his friends, the Colonnese, takes place, and at Genoa he learns the fact and writes his despairing farewell to Cola and to Rome: *Tu quoque longum vale, Roma, si haec vera sunt! Indos ego potius aut Garamantas petam.* A few weeks later Cola was a fugitive.

Then comes the terrible year of 1348. The Black Death raged at Avignon, as in many other cities. Among its victims was Petrarca's friend, Cardinal Colonna, and perhaps Laura; and Petrarca, who was at Parma, perhaps made then the well-known note on the margin of his MS. of Virgil's poems. He had left Vacluse, probably for fear of the plague. We hear of him not only at Parma, but at Verona and at Padua, in which city, with his strange indifference as to the character of his friends and the causes to which they were

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* in his celebrated *Canzone* and his *Epistola Hortatoria*, in which he extols Cola, but utters notes of alarm and warning; for he had begun to suspect the truth.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

devoted, he accepted the hospitality of Jacopo II da Carrara, 'a typical Italian despot, who had obtained his lordship by murder and forgery and used it to promote art and the welfare of his city' (Hollway-Calthrop). Shortly afterwards he is once more at Rome, lamenting over the desolation of the scene of his coronation. Then we find him back at Vacluse, intensely occupied with his *Canzoniere* and his classical studies and classical manuscripts, on the collection and copying of which he spent much of his wealth—and that was considerable, for he now held the sinecures of a priory, three canonries, and an archdeaconry, and had rent-free large official residences. Moreover, Florence had revoked the sentence of banishment passed against the Petrarco family and he had perhaps recovered ancestral property—a matter which seems to have occasioned his first meeting with Boccaccio at Florence.

In 1352 Cola di Rienzo is sent by Charles IV from Prag to Avignon, where, in spite of Petrarca's appeals, Clement VI imprisons him. But Clement dies and Innocent VI, probably urged by Petrarca, at length (in 1354) releases the Tribune and sends him back to Italy with Cardinal Albornoz. Petrarca had addressed a dignified appeal to the Romans on the Tribune's behalf; but he evidently foreboded some tragedy, and, although perhaps not prepared for the suddenness of the catastrophe, he accepted it with equanimity. Indeed, if (as some believe) he composed his fine canzone *Italia mia* at this time—perhaps on coming in sight of Italy on his journey from Avignon, which he had now left for ever—it seems almost as if the fading away of this dream of a new Roman Republic opened up for him a far more glorious vision—that of a federated Italian nation liberated for ever from 'foreign swords,' 'Bavarian deceit,' and 'German fury.'<sup>1</sup>

When, in 1353, he left Avignon—more than ever hateful to him since the death of Laura—Petrarca perhaps intended to

<sup>1</sup> *Che fan qui tante pellegrine spade? Perchè 'l verde terreno Del barbarico sangue si dipinga? . . . Ben provvide Natura al nostro stato, Quando dell' Alpi schermo Pose fra noi e la tedesca rabbia.* One might almost imagine the *Canzone* to have been written by Carducci or D'Annunzio, so wonderfully does it apply to the present state of things.



## LITERATURE (1300-1400)

find a home at Florence, where Boccaccio was settled. But when he reached Milan he was persuaded by the Signor of that city, Archbishop Giovanni Visconti, to remain there, and was given a house with a view of S. Ambrogio and the Alps. With his usual strange indifference as to the character of his patrons, despite the horror of Boccaccio and his other republican admirers, he continued to accept the patronage of the Visconti—and that too during the reigns of the two sons of Archbishop Giovanni, Galeazzo II and Bernabò, some of whose ghastly atrocities have been related in Chapter III. So far indeed had he forgotten his enthusiasm for liberty, and his tirades against *la tedesca rabbia*, as to write ecstatic letters to Charles of Bohemia—as Dante did to Henry of Luxemburg—inviting him to come to Italy; and, when he came, Petrarca was doubtless present in a place of honour at the Iron Crown ceremony in S. Ambrogio. Nay, even after the collapse of the new Emperor's inglorious *Römerzug* the unstable-minded poet undertook, as Milanese envoy, the formidable journey to Prag in order to visit his new hero; and on his return he is said to have strongly supported the tyrant Galeazzo in his brutal treatment of Pavia<sup>1</sup>—conduct that greatly disconcerted Boccaccio when, in 1359, he visited his friend at Milan.

In 1360 Petrarca was for some months at Paris as an envoy in connexion with the Peace of Brétigny and the ransom of King John of France, taken prisoner by the English at Poitiers in 1356. In 1361 his son Giovanni died (perhaps of the second Great Plague), and his great friend the Flemish musician Louis, whom he used to call 'Socrates.' Then his daughter Francesca married, and the young people decided to make their home with him for the rest of his life. In 1362 occurred that strange 'conversion' of Boccaccio, which, as will be related in the next section, brought out conspicuously some of the most admirable traits in Petrarca's character. In the

<sup>1</sup> See p. 84 n. After Pavia and its reformer, Friar Bussolari (a prototype of Savonarola), had surrendered, Galeazzo broke all his promises, imprisoned and perhaps murdered the friar, extinguished republicanism, and built the great Castel Mirabello.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

next year died (probably also of the plague) two more of the three very intimate companions of his to whom he gave the familiar names 'Socrates,' 'Laelius,' and 'Simonides'; and now life is for him rather desolate, for of his companions only Boccaccio is left. It is therefore not surprising that, weary of princes' favours—and, we may hope, sickened by his long experience of the brutalities of the Visconti tyrants—he was overcome by the longing to leave Milan and to settle in Venice, which had always strongly attracted him since the day when, some ten years before, he had visited the city as envoy of Archbishop Giovanni. The Venetians, when they heard of his intention, had (about 1362) given him the house of the Two Towers on the Riva degli Schiavoni, known still as the *Casa di Petrarca*. This he seems to have adopted as his home, and soon after he had settled there must have occurred (1364) those picturesque events which he describes so graphically—the triumphant return of the Venetian galleys from Crete and the grand display in the Piazza at which he was present as an honoured guest, seated under a gaily coloured awning in front of the horses of S. Marco.

During the next six years Petrarca seems to have abandoned his home on the Riva degli Schiavoni rather frequently, visiting Florence, where the restless Boccaccio was sometimes to be found—and Padua, where his friend Francesco Carrara (Jacopo's successor) was playing a most ignoble part against Venice—and Pavia, where for several long periods he was the guest of his old patron, the wealthy and brutal Galeazzo II, in his new Castello.<sup>1</sup> Whether he exercised any appreciable influence on any of these princely patrons, and through them on the course of history, one can hardly hope to discover; but it does seem possible that his very vehement and very long letters (we hear of one of *eighteen* folio pages!) may have helped to induce Pope Urban V to make his ill-fated attempt to restore the Roman Papacy—as has been related elsewhere.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For Petrarca's presence at the wedding of Galeazzo's daughter to our Duke of Clarence, see p. 85 *n*.

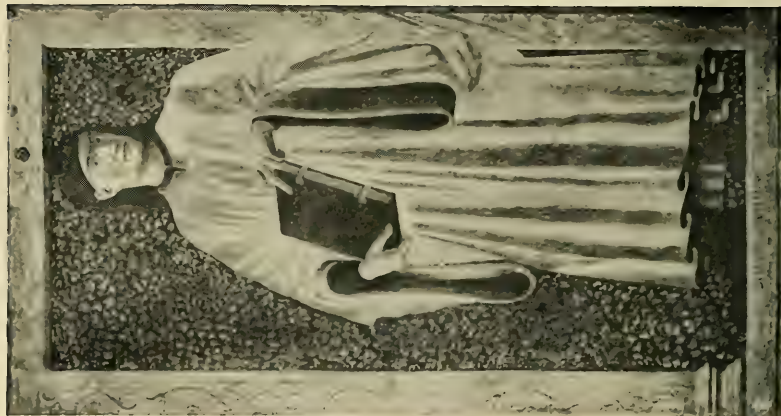
<sup>2</sup> The vehemence of Dante, Petrarca, Savonarola, and many others, in their



10. PETRARCH'S HOUSE AT ARQUÀ



II. (a) PETRARCA



(b) BOCCACCIO



## LITERATURE (1300-1400)

About the year 1370 Petrarca built himself a house at Arquà, midst the Euganean hills, and here he spent much of his remaining life. His health began to give way, and of several serious attacks, probably due to a failing heart, he has given us graphic and somewhat amusing accounts—for he ever held doctors in great disdain and took a malicious pleasure in ridiculing them. Among the pleasanter records of these last four years are various letters to Boccaccio, in which Petrarca mentions the fact that he is (for the first time?) reading the *Decameron* and translating the story of Griselda into Latin. In one of his letters he expresses the hope that death might find him reading or writing; and perhaps the story is true which relates that he was found dead (July 18, 1374) with his head bowed down over a book, or an unfinished manuscript. Byron tells us, regardless of accent, that 'They keep his dust in Arquà, where he died'; but the sarcophagus, 'reared in air' on pillars in front of the church, seems to have been pillaged; for an arm of the poet is said to exist in Madrid, and a finger is shown in Petrarca's house at Arquà.

To describe and discuss Petrarca's numerous literary productions is not my purpose. For the scholar and the historian of literature his Latin poems and his many Latin tracts and letters, written with exquisite Ciceronian grace, will always have a charm;<sup>1</sup> but, though his Latin works had

attacks on the corruption of the Roman Church should not make us imagine that they had the faintest desire for, or foreboding of, any Reformation from outside. The contrast between Petrarca's reverent earnestness in regard to this question of the re-establishment of the Papacy at Rome and the fierce denunciations and ribald satire that he uses in regard to the papal court and Urban's ridiculous flotilla of baggage and women is very difficult for the non-Catholic mind to understand.

<sup>1</sup> The *Africa*, on which he built his hopes of fame, is a 'Scipiad'—the glorification of the Scipios. As a fine specimen of mastery over the language and metre of Virgil and Lucan, and at the same time as being singularly prophetic of the late insidious offers of peace by the Germanic *unicus eversor pacis*, the following words of Scipio addressed to his grandson in regard to Hannibal's 'Punic perfidy' may be of interest: *Ille quidem variâ tentavit flectere mentem Arte dolisque novis, dulcem per singula pacem, Pacem iterans, velansque dolos sub nomine pacis, Unicus eversor pacis. Firmissime persta,*

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

great and purifying influence in the classical revival, the only heirloom of much value that he has left for our age is the collection of his Italian poems called *Il Canzoniere*. It consists of 317 sonnets and numerous canzoni, ballate, etc. There are four sections: *Sonetti e Canzoni in Vita di Madonna Laura*, *Sonetti e Canzoni in Morte di Madonna Laura*, *Trionfi*, *Sonetti e Canzoni sopra varj Argomenti*. With the exception of the fourth section the whole of Petrarca's *Canzoniere* is inspired by thoughts of Laura, and by far the greater part is a wondrous attempt to depict his passion for his Lady. He did not indeed attempt to paint with words her loveliness; <sup>1</sup> for, though to him 'Homer was dumb,' his poetic instinct told him that a Helen's or a Laura's charms must be suggested by the effects that they produce; but he adopted a method very different from that of Homer: he gives us what perhaps we may call an auto-psychological study <sup>2</sup> of infinite detail, more elaborate than *Mona Lisa* herself—a work of self-portraiture in which are described or intimated the multitudinous emotions that affect the lover's soul—pain and joy, hope and despair, passion and remorse, reverence and disdain, resignation and anger.

*Propositumque tene.* . . . There are large imitations from the *Aeneid*. Instead of a Descent into Hades he gives us an Ascent into Heaven, 'where,' as Mr. Hollway-Calthrop puts it, 'the Almighty expounds Christian dogmas to allegorical impersonations of Rome and Carthage.' Of his Latin letters the most interesting volumes are the *Epistolae de rebus familiaribus*, *Ep. Seniles*, and *Ep. Variae*. His Latin treatises on *Solitary Life*, *Good and Bad Fortune*, etc., are in the style of Cicero's *De Senectute*; his *De Illustribus viris* are after the model of Plutarch's *Lives*. He was a fervent admirer of the works of St. Augustine, and one of his best and most pathetic Latin writings is a secret diary, *De contemptu mundi*, in which he holds a dialogue with the author of the *De civitate Dei* and the *Confessiones*. In this diary he says of Laura, 'Through love of her I attained to the love of God.' This makes one almost believe that she was more real than ideal—not merely a symbol of the longed-for laurel crown.

<sup>1</sup> We find here and there slight attempts: e.g. *treccie bionde, capei d'oro, crespe chiome d'or puro e lucente*, etc. A portrait of her by the Siennese master Simone Martini gave great delight to Petrarca, who lauds him in Sonnets 1, 49, 50. The miniature in the Laurentian MS. of the *Canzoniere* at Florence is not seductive. The pretended portrait in the 'Spanish Chapel' is certainly not, as Vasari asserts, by Petrarca's 'Simone,' for he died at Avignon in 1344.

<sup>2</sup> Rather a Germanic expression; but not so bad as 'der erste subjektiv-analytisch-psychologische Lyriker und Gefühlsromantiker' (*Vossler*).

## LITERATURE (1300-1400)

In the poems *In Vita di Madonna Laura* there is a certain amount of autobiography. We are told, more or less directly, how Petrarca first meets his 'sweet and bitter enemy'; how he is caught in the ambush of love, or as a moth in a flame; how Laura accepts his homage on the condition that he should not speak of love, and how he breaks his promise and is crushed by her disdain. Then follow ecstasies and woes; he meditates suicide; he is petrified by her Medusa-like fury—turned into a 'rock that echoes Death'—transformed, as Actaeon by Diana, into a stag, to be torn to pieces by his own thoughts (a metaphor used also in Shelley's *Adonais*)—metamorphosed into a laurel, as Daphne in Ovid's poem. Then, with a sudden change from cursing to blessing, he writes his Sonnet of Benedictions: 'Blessed be the day and the month and the year and the season and the time and the hour and the minute and the country and the place in which I was overtaken by those two beauteous eyes which have bound me as their captive.' There is, one must allow, a great deal that is exceedingly pretty in this first part of the *Canzoniere*, and sometimes one stumbles across a noble thought worthily expressed, but there is also a great deal of silly sentimentality, and many a ridiculous conceit. Take, for instance, Sonnet 43. Near the Tuscan shore he sees a laurel, and, excited by the thought of Laura, he approaches it incautiously and steps into a 'runnel hidden by the grass.' The accident draws forth this observation: 'At all events I am glad to have changed style [fashion] from eyes to feet'; which means, according to the poet Leopardi, 'I am glad to have wet feet as a change, instead of eyes for ever wet with tears.' And so it goes on through 207 sonnets, 17 canzoni, and numerous ballads, etc.

The second part consists of 90 sonnets and many other poems written after the death of Laura. They are of a higher mood; many are noble in thought and in language. At first there is an outburst of passionate grief; then peace and consolation steal into the poet's soul; he has visions of his beloved, by day in the woods of Vaucluse and on the banks of the Sorgue, by night in dreamland; she smiles as she gazes

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

on him with tearful eyes ; she brings him sprays of palm and laurel from Heaven ; she speaks to him and dries his tears and comforts him and bids him purify his love and become worthy to ' lift his wings from earth ' and join her in the world above. So earnest and unaffected is his language at times that we can hardly doubt that Petrarca's remorse, and his joy at liberation from the *spietato giogo*, the ' pitiless yoke ' of his long slavery, were genuine ; we can hardly doubt the sincerity of the very beautiful final *Canzone*, addressed to the Virgin, whom he supplicates to hear his tears and sighs, to soften his heart and guide his erring steps, for ' Medusa and my error have made me a rock<sup>1</sup> that drips with moisture vain.' But what sins were these that needed such forgiveness ? How was it possible that a hopeless love, however passionate, for one so pure and angelic could have caused such bitter remorse and such denunciation ? How could this sainted woman ever have been a Medusa ? What does Petrarca mean when he exclaims, *Non vorrei rivederla in questo Inferno* ? Such questions may well give us pause when we feel inclined to dogmatize about the personality, or the impersonality, of Laura.

The *Trionfi in Vita e in Morte di Madonna Laura*, written late in life, consist of six long poems in *terza rima*, where mythological, classical, medieval, Biblical, and allegorical characters, Visions, Dreams, Laura, Dante, Beatrice, the Sun, Death, Time, and many other *dramatis personae*, go to make up a motley and bizarre production that is supposed to represent how Love triumphs over Man, Chastity over Love, Death over both, Fame over Death, Time over Fame, Eternity over Time. The Miscellaneous Poems are of various periods. Some are notable from a literary, others from an historical or biographical point of view. Of special interest are two sonnets addressed to Boccaccio, the famous *Canzone* addressed, probably, to Cola di Rienzo, a sonnet on the death of Cino di Pistoia, the tirades against the papal courts at Avignon and Rome, and the very beautiful *Canzone* beginning with

<sup>1</sup> With allusion again to the name ' Petra-rca.'



## LITERATURE (1300-1400)

the words *Italia mia*, to which on several occasions reference has been made.

From what has been said it will be seen that, though they were contemporaries for some 17 years, Petrarca is separated from Dante by an impassable gulf. I do not here speak of poetic genius. For centuries the *Canzoniere* was read and admired far more than the *Divina Commedia*, and there may be even yet some existing who, blinded by excess of light, turn gladly to the softer radiance of Petrarca's poetry—to its pretty scenery, its pretty sentiments, its pretty word-music. But, putting aside all such comparison, we cannot but be struck, when we think of the two poets, by the *modernity* of Petrarca. He is, indeed, both as regards personality and as regards his poetry, the prototype of the modern 'man of letters,' whereas any such expression used in connexion with the name of Dante would make one laugh. It would be very interesting to hear, in some Aristophanic Underworld or Lucianic Dialogue, what Dante thinks of Petrarca. What Petrarca thought of Dante we know pretty well; for when (in 1359) Boccaccio sent him a copy of the *Divina Commedia*, urging him to study its incomparable beauties and sublimities, he answered that he really did admire the poem, but that his admiration was purely 'critical'—limited to style and language, in which 'Dante easily carries off the palm among writers of Italian.' Petrarca's conception of poetry was somewhat of the nature of a pretty and well-kept Italian villa-garden (such as he had probably enjoyed at Milan) with the Alps in view—at a convenient distance.<sup>1</sup>

It remains to say a few words about Petrarca as 'humanist,' that is as one who forwarded the revival of 'humanizing'

<sup>1</sup> Dante's greatness, as that of Nature, must be learnt by long and loving intimacy. Quotation is of little use if context is unknown, but I wish I could quote here a sonnet of Petrarca's (I, xii) where he competes with Dante on the subject of the 'Veronica' (*Par.* xxxi)—and with what result! In the place of a noble and tender pathos we have vapid, egotistical sentimentalism. And if we are asked to explain away the egotism as a 'lyric cry,' I would contrast Petrarca's sonnet (I, 63) on the blanching of a lover's face in the presence of the beloved—a tangle of foolish conceits—with the lyrics of the *Vita Nuova*, or with the splendid Ode of Sappho on a similar subject.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

(refining, emancipating) classical studies—*litteræ humaniores*. In this movement, which contributed so powerfully to the Rinascimento, he was one of the first workers. He helped to found two universities (Pavia and Prag), and his influence was of a nature very different from that of the dry-as-dust manuscript-hunters and (often foul-mouthed) pedants of the next century.<sup>1</sup> Not only did he discover most important manuscripts,<sup>2</sup> and form collections, and employ scribes to transcribe and translate classical authors, but he had the insight to perceive, as Milton did, that the value for us of Greek and Roman literature consists not only in the perfection of form but in the great thoughts and the great imaginings of the authors. As Mr. Hollway-Calthrop well says, Petrarca's desire was 'to bring the world back to the mental standpoint of the classical writers.' At the same time Petrarca had also a boundless passion for form and great imitative talent. His Ciceronian prose, if not his Virgilian verse, has the brilliance, if not the ring, of the genuine article. But all that glitters is not gold. There is more valuable metal in the rough ore of Dante's *De Monarchia* than in all Petrarca's elegant Epistles.

It is indeed remarkable that one so passionately devoted to literary form that he often seems to think the most successful way of arriving at a great thought is to start from an elegant phrase should have himself possessed so little classic calm, so

<sup>1</sup> Such as Poggio and Valla. But in spite of his disdain for medieval scholasticism (*vide* his fierce battle with the pedants of the Averroes-Aristotelian party, whose Bible was Michael Scott's Latin version of the Arabian commentator) Petrarca himself was often ludicrously pedantic. The *Trionfi* suffer from this. He is said to have remarked that he delighted in the country 'because the cackling of geese reminded him of those which saved the Capitol.' When congratulating Charles IV on the birth of a daughter he alludes to Isis, Sappho, the Sibyl, Cleopatra, Zenobia, Penthesilea, and about twenty more ancient ladies.

<sup>2</sup> He discovered, in the course of his wanderings, Cicero's *Pro Archia*, Varro, the second *Decade* of Livy's History, some of Pliny's writings, etc., and spread the knowledge of Cicero's *Epistles*. He seems also to have had something to do with the discovery of the *Philippic Orations* and the *De Milone*. He possessed a MS. of Virgil (now in the Laurenziana) and (but could not read) a MS. of Homer—perhaps the only one existing in Italy at that time—and at his instigation Boccaccio had a Latin prose version made of parts of the *Iliad* and some of Plato's works.

## LITERATURE (1300-1400)

little sculpturesque self-restraint. 'Unrest was his most striking characteristic,' says Bertoli (*La Vita It. nel Trecento*); 'sospirando la pace non l'ha mai trovata . . . invoca la solitudine e la morte, ma cerca la compagnia e ha paura dei fulmini; disprezza le ricchezze e le desidera; scrive da santo ed asceta, e poi da pagano; instabile, irrequieto, innamorato, idealista ed allo stesso tempo materialista.' We are reminded of Horace's *Tigellius*: *nil fuit unquam sic impar sibi*. And if we turn to his public life we find the same kind of strange inconsistency—what in many men would be insincerity and double-mindedness. He is enthusiastic for republican liberty; he fiercely denounces the 'barbaric oppressor' and *la tedesca rabbia*; he pays homage to Cola di Rienzo—but he is the friend and dependent of the Colonna princes and such blood-stained tyrants as Galeazzo of Milan and Jacopo Carrara of Padua and writes an almost servile letter inviting the Bohemian Charles to Italy; he extols Robert of Naples as *magnanimo, divino, Re dei Re*, forgetting that this divine and magnanimous King of Kings had induced Pope Clement to transfer the seat of the Papacy to Avignon—an act that sometimes, just for a passing moment, stirred his wrath almost as deeply as it had stirred the wrath of Dante.

### BOCCACCIO

Boccaccio's personal character is not specially interesting or edifying, and, if we except the Great Plague of 1348, the points of contact that his life and works have with the history of his times are much fewer and of very much less importance than what we have noted in the case of Dante and in that of Petrarca. Moreover, his writings, although they doubtless had a great and salutary influence on the style and other literary characteristics of Italian prose, are for us of incomparably less value than the *Divina Commedia*, or even the *Canzoniere*. I shall therefore give no full-length portrait and shall not attempt more than quite a brief notice of the *Decameron* and his other productions.

Dante, Petrarca, and Boccaccio belonged to three very

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

different classes. Dante, claiming descent from Roman ancestry through the Crusader Cacciaguida (although the later Alighieri, as he himself too before his exile, were of the Guelf, republican, party), is ever contemptuous of the *grassi*, the new upstarts who had made themselves 'fat' by shopkeeping and by the *arte del cambio*. Especially fierce is he against the 'boors' who come from other towns (among which he prophetically mentions Certaldo itself!) 'and turn Florentines, and ply money-trade and commerce'; and he bids such a one 'go back again to Simifonte [near Certaldo], where his grandsire went about begging'—advice given to Boccaccio himself, it is said, by a Florentine lady (perhaps the one so insultingly depicted in his *Corbaccio*) who told him to leave honest women alone and go back to his pigs—for which animals Certaldo in Val d'Elsa was no less famous than that 'pasture of Circe,' the Casentino.<sup>1</sup>

Giovanni Boccaccio, whose father, known as Boccaccino, was a merchant of Certaldo, was born in 1313—the year in which Henry of Luxemburg died—possibly at Certaldo, possibly near Florence, but more probably in Paris. His mother, whom he never mentions, was probably a Parisian girl, and 'as his admirers assert' (says Filippo Villani) was married to his father.<sup>2</sup> As a lad, Boccaccio seems to have lived in or near Florence<sup>3</sup> with his father, who intended to make him a tradesman; but, doubtless on account of the young fellow's obstinacy, this fate was exchanged for one perhaps more uncongenial, namely, the legal profession; and for some six years, says tradition, he studied under the poet-jurist Cino of Pistoia, who was also perhaps Petrarca's teacher at Bologna. However that may be, while still a young man Boccaccio was at Naples, whither he had been sent, it is said, to continue his studies. If this were the intent, it failed. Siren Parthenope proved too seductive. What with the voluptuous Angevin

<sup>1</sup> *Purg.* xiv. For Certaldo see *Par.* xvi, 50 and 62.

<sup>2</sup> This younger Villani, who succeeded Boccaccio as lecturer on Dante, in his Latin *Lives of Florentines* calls the father *pater naturalis*, i.e. not legitimate.

<sup>3</sup> The 'Casa Boccaccio' (Corbignano), not far from Settignano, seems certainly to have belonged to the old Boccaccio.



## LITERATURE (1300-1400.)

court, where old King Robert's granddaughter, Joanna—now about 19 years of age—was learning to play her rôle of infamy, and what with climatic and Virgilian influences,<sup>1</sup> Justinian was soon dethroned in favour of Fiammetta. This flame of Boccaccio's—nominally the daughter of a Conte d'Aquino but believed to be a daughter of King Robert—was the wife of some court personage. The lovers first met in the church of S. Lorenzo, probably on Easter Eve of 1338. He was 25, she 28 years of age. It is unknown what their relations really were and whether the whole story of their love was not a fiction evolved by Boccaccio's imagination, who (as we know from his writings on Dante) regarded Beatrice herself merely as what Mr. Symonds calls 'a part of the necessary equipment of a poet.' But in any case it seems certain that some high-born lady, whoever she may have been, encouraged him to write—and fairly certain that the lacrimose lamentations about her icy disdain which we find in some of his sonnets, and which are in such striking contrast to his novel *Fiammetta*, give us the true version.

About 1340 the old laird<sup>2</sup> thought it high time to recall his prodigal to Certaldo. Here, naturally, he sulked. He paints in gloomy colours the 'dark, silent, melancholy house' and the 'sour, repellent aspect of his frozen, uncouth, and avaricious parent'—a picture that need not affect us too deeply, for Filippo Villani assures us that the father did all he could to conciliate and help the fractious youth. The same kind of thing evidently went on at Florence, or perhaps at the 'Casa Boccaccio,' some three miles from Florence. And yet stirring events were happening just then, for it was in 1342 and 1343 that the shortlived and bloody reign of the 'Duke of Athens'

<sup>1</sup> Filippo Villani tells us that it happened one day that Giovanni came to where Virgil's ashes lie entombed (on Posilipo), and a sudden love of the Pierian Muses smote his heart, and he vowed to devote his life to poetry. Boccaccio, however, tells us that from early years he had tried his hand at verse, and he laments that his father's opposition had prevented him from becoming 'one of the world's famous poets.'

<sup>2</sup> The character and life of Boccaccio remind one of Boswell and his father, the old Laird of Auchinleck.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

took place—an episode of such momentous importance in the history of the Republic that Machiavelli expended on it his best powers as word-painter; but to Boccaccio, although—perhaps because—he lived amidst these events, they seemed of less import than the amours of Pamfilo and Fiammetta, or of Troilus and Cressid.

About 1344, the father having married again—perhaps for the third time—the son, now over 30 years of age, returned to Naples. Here old King Robert had died,<sup>1</sup> and Joanna, at the age of 27, had ascended the Angevin throne. Boccaccio must have known what was this woman's real character, for he was at Naples when, in 1345, her consort, Andreas of Hungary, was murdered—with her connivance, if not at her instigation—by the man whom she soon afterwards married. And yet he indubitably played the devoted and humble courtier, and lauded her in his writings<sup>2</sup> as 'the glory of Italy.' Still, we must allow that he had good reason to be grateful, if it be true that her royal command that he should try his hand at all kinds of situations as amusing and *risquées* as possible suggested to him what finally resulted in the *Decameron*—in the same way as the desire of Queen Bess to see Falstaff in love resulted in the *Merry Wives*.

In 1349, the year after the Great Plague, we find him again in Florence. His father had died—perhaps one of the countless victims of the Morte Nera—and Giovanni had inherited half the estate and the guardianship of his younger brother, Jacopo. He seems to have been employed by the Signoria on various missions, of which two are of interest to us, if not politically; for on one of them he visited Dante's daughter in Ravenna, and in 1351 he was sent to Padua in order to announce to Petrarca the conditions under which he might procure, but perhaps did not procure, the restoration of his confiscated family property. (The friendship between these two, which influenced the younger so beneficently, had begun probably by corre-

<sup>1</sup> Boccaccio was evidently not at Naples or Rome at the time of Petrarca's coronation (1341).

<sup>2</sup> In a Latin *Eclogue*, however, he condemns her conduct.

## LITERATURE (1300-1400)

spondence, and in 1350, when on his way to Rome for the Jubilee, Petrarca had been the guest of Boccaccio in Florence, or at Settignano.) From this time onward we find the author of *Fiammetta* and *L'Ameto* becoming more and more the serious student and spending his energies on voluminous encyclopaedic compilations, historical, mythological, and geographical. Moreover, at the instigation of Petrarca (who always lamented that his precious MS. of Homer was 'dumb' to him) he not only began learning Greek, but took into his house a repulsively dirty Byzantine, Leontios Pilatos of Calabria,<sup>1</sup> whom he helped to obtain some sort of professional post in Florence and to make a Latin translation of parts of Homer's and Plato's works. His Greek studies perhaps made Boccaccio more appreciative of the greatness of Dante, the whole of whose *Divina Commedia* he seems to have transcribed in order to present the MS. to Petrarca. The friends had doubtless discussed the subject when they met at Padua in 1351, and Boccaccio evidently wished to compel Petrarca to read the poem properly; but when at last the MS. was finished and sent the result (as we have seen in the last Section) was a little disheartening.

In 1361 took place what is sometimes called the conversion of Boccaccio by Peter of Siena. A Carthusian monk, Pietro di Petroni, had a death-bed vision of heaven and hell and sent messages to a number of persons, among whom were Petrarca and Boccaccio, that they would soon die and would go to hell unless they gave up 'profane letters' and changed entirely their mode of life. Boccaccio was consternated and determined to burn all his writings and become monk. Petrarca took a very much more sensible view. There are noble passages in his letter to his friend. He maintains that 'profane' literature need be no hindrance to saintliness, but may ennoble and purify character if rightly used. At the same time he hints

<sup>1</sup> Petrarca says he wrote letters 'longer and dirtier than his beard.' This 'first Greek professor in a Western University,' as he is called by Mr. Hollway-Calthrop, was killed (like Ajax Oilei) by lightning on board ship, when he was returning from Constantinople.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

that Boccaccio might perhaps with advantage change his mode of *life* and his moral outlook; and he very generously offers to buy his books until he has recovered equilibrium. The final result was that Boccaccio continued his philosophical and classical studies, but expressed bitter remorse in regard to his licentious publications and begged all his acquaintances to destroy them.

Then we hear of a visit to Naples on the invitation of one of the wealthy Florentine-Neapolitan Acciaiuoli, who, when Boccaccio refused to compile his biography, treated him shabbily and was thereupon assailed by the indignant man of letters with satire and insult—a proceeding which may remind one of Tasso (especially of Goethe's Tasso), but which, as Mr. Symonds has justly remarked, offers a striking contrast to Dante's dignified *come sa di sale* or to Johnson turning in silence from Lord Chesterfield's door.

In 1365 he was in some official capacity at Avignon, trying to persuade Urban V to return to Rome, and in 1368 he was at Rome, congratulating Urban on his return. Between these two dates he visited Venice, where (the poet being absent) he was received by Petrarca's daughter and son-in-law in the house on the Riva degli Schiavoni.

In 1373, now 60 years of age, he was appointed by the Florentine authorities lecturer on the *Divina Commedia*. He gave his lectures (50 or so, it is thought) in the little church of S. Stefano, close to the Ponte Vecchio—or, as some think, in the Badia (then, perhaps, called S. Stefano). Each lecture seems to have covered about 45 lines, for he arrived only at *Inf.* xvii. Apparently, therefore, he tried to do the thing thoroughly; but, although in regard to information it is often interesting and valuable, the *Comento* contains a great deal of very worthless exegesis and proves—as does also his much earlier, bright little *Vita di Dante*<sup>1</sup>—that in spite of all his professed enthusiasm for Dante's poetry he was hopelessly incapable (as

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps written about 1350, after his (above-mentioned) visit to Dante's younger daughter, Beatrice, who was a nun at Ravenna. He was commissioned to take her, as a present from the Florentines, ten gold florins.



## LITERATURE (1300-1400)

doubtless many of us are) of grasping at all fully Dante's message. He degrades the *Vita Nuova* into a little love-story, regarding Beatrice as a sort of Fiammetta and chuckling at the idea of a boy of 9 falling in love.

It was while these lectures were being given that Petrarca died. The death of his friend so affected Boccaccio's weak state of health that it probably hastened his death, which took place at Certaldo on December 21, 1375.

The following are the chief writings of Boccaccio and their probable dates: *Il Filocopo* (early); *Il Filostrato* (at Naples?), c. 1338; *La Teseide*, *L'Ameto*, and *Ninfale Fiesolano*, all three c. 1341-1342, during sojourn at Certaldo and Settignano after recall from Naples; *L'Amorosa Visione*, c. 1343; *Fiammetta*, perhaps first sketched on recall from Naples, but evidently not published till long afterwards; *Decameron*, begun perhaps at Naples as early as 1345 at instigation of Queen Joanna, but not finished till c. 1353. The very disagreeable *Corbaccio*, already mentioned, if written about 1359, shows to what relapses Boccaccio was liable.

About his minor works a few remarks will suffice. The *Filostrato* and *Teseide* relate the stories of Troilus and Cressid and of Palaemon and Arcite. They teem with folly and nastiness and are utterly undeserving to be regarded as epic poems; but for the literary student they are interesting on account of the limpid and lucid flow of the language and because they were made use of by Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Dryden; moreover, they are in *ottava rima*,<sup>1</sup> which, though already used in popular ballads, appears here for the first time in a recognized literary work. The *Ameto* is also interesting because it is an early example of pastoral landscape background in Italian literature. 'Florentine Nymphs' meet their lovers in the vale of the Mugnone (the Arno-affluent that descends from behind Fiesole), and, as in the *Decameron*, tales are related by the various members of the party. It is composed in prose and verse (*terza rima*), and is exceedingly fantastic and in

<sup>1</sup> The eight-lined stanza with three rimes used later by Pulci, Boiardo, Ariosto, and Tasso, and, in a modified form, by Spenser and Byron.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

parts disgusting. The *Ninfale Fiesolano* (a 'Nymph-story of Fiesole') describes, in *ottava rima*, the loves of Affrico and Mensola, personifications of the two well-known streams that descend from the hills of Fiesole and Settignano. The *poemetto* is seductively pretty, but contains much that is nauseous—a Lady Geraldine in beauty and foulness. As for the *Amorosa Visione* (50 cantos in *terza rima*), it is, if not ironical, a most painful, unintentional caricature of the older, Dantesque, allegorical style, and displays the most astounding misconception of the *sommo bene* of Dante; for the Empyrean of this 'Vision of Love' is what Mr. Symonds rightly calls a 'Paradise of sensual Beatitude.' Lastly, the novel *Fiammetta*, in which are described with Wertherian vividness the heroine and her passionate longings and jealousies and despairs at the reported unfaithfulness of Pamfilo (Giovanni Boccaccio in disguise), may appear to us indescribably silly and wearisome, but it is interesting as perhaps the first example in modern European literature of a 'psychological fiction'—the first full delineation of passion not strictly autobiographical, such as that of the *Vita Nuova* or the *Canzoniere*. If 'Fiammetta' was any such person as King Robert's daughter, and if (as is almost certain) all her amorous ecstasies are fiction, Boccaccio must have published the work late in life, for he would not have dared to return to Naples after its publication.

The *Decameron* consists of a hundred tales which are supposed to be related by ten persons and (as the title implies) during the space of ten days. The setting of these Hundred Tales is striking. Boccaccio had returned to Florence in 1349, a year after the Black Death, and doubtless had been deeply impressed by all that he had heard from survivors. It was, I believe, then that the idea struck him by which he so ingeniously bound together his collection of tales, many of which (and probably the more ribald of them) he had doubtless written some years before at the suggestion of Queen Joanna. In his Introduction he gives an exceedingly graphic description of the awful ravages of the Great Plague—a description that has associated his name with those of Thucydides, Proco-

## LITERATURE (1300-1400)

pius,<sup>1</sup> and Defoe. He relates how one Tuesday morning seven young ladies, who had met for devotion in S. Maria Novella, determined for fear of the pestilence to withdraw to the country, and how, accompanied by three young men of their acquaintance, they passed ten days of joyous existence, feasting and singing and telling stories, at two villas near Florence.<sup>2</sup>

As regards the contents of the *Decameron* and the nature of these contents, the following brief remarks may suffice. Many of the finest of the Tales—some of which are well known to us under other forms<sup>3</sup>—are traceable to Oriental, French, Italian, and other sources. Invented by Boccaccio—to amuse the ladies of the Neapolitan court—were perhaps a good many of the most ribald and indecent; but it must be remembered that Boccaccio by no means created the taste for such things. Thousands of *Fabliaux* and *Conti* and *Novelle*,<sup>4</sup> more or less ‘amusing,’ existed and were eagerly read by *gentili donne*—as we see from a list of such fashionable romances given in the *Corbaccio*—with that insensibility in regard to verbal obscenity that one finds so astounding in the case of the seven ‘gentle ladies’ of Villa Palmieri, ‘whose honour,’ Boccaccio

<sup>1</sup> His description of the Plague, though in details original, is evidently founded on the famous description by Thucydides (or that by Procopius?). It was therefore probably written soon after he began the study of Greek with Leontios Pilatos in 1352.

<sup>2</sup> The first two days at Poggio Gherardo (now belonging to Mrs. Janet Ross), near the road to Settignano, whence they removed to the great Villa Palmieri, between Florence and Fiesole. I feel ever more convinced that the well-known group of seven ladies and three men, listening to music in a garden, in the great fresco (*Triumph of Death*) of the Pisan Campo Santo—whether it be by Orcagna, who lived till 1368, or some Sienese painter of the same period—represents the Decameron party, though Vasari guesses that the central figure represents Castracane (!). Amid the garden-trees flit Cupids, and floating anigh with her scythe, threatening to mow down the whole group, is the terrible figure of Death. In Pisa the Black Death had quite lately carried off six out of every seven of the inhabitants.

<sup>3</sup> *Melchisedech and the Three Rings*, retold by Lessing in his *Nathan*; *Isabella and the Basil-pot*, retold by Keats; *The Patient Griselda*; Shakespeare’s *All’s Well, Measure for Measure*, and *Cymbeline*; Chaucer’s *Knight’s Tale* and *Franklyn’s Tale* (also existing in an old English ballad), have all much in common with Boccaccio.

<sup>4</sup> More extravagantly ribald than all else perhaps were the Low-Latin songs of the Wandering Students (*Carmina Vagorum*).

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

assures us, 'no stain defiled.' Moreover, we must remember that this epoch-making *Commedia Umana* of 'Easy-going Jack' (Giovanni della Tranquillità), as it has been called by its admirers in contrast to the 'irksome, grim, and sphinx-like' *Commedia Divina* of Dante, was, as it were, one of the most vigorous attempts of the new-born Spirit of Liberty to free itself, as an infant Hercules, from the coils of medievalism—a most audacious revolt against a false conception of life and human nature<sup>1</sup>—a most merciless revelation of the superstitions, the hypocrisies, and the unutterable vices fostered in the very bosom of the Church of that age. But even if we concede (what his later remorse makes almost incredible) that Boccaccio had a higher object than frivolous amusement, we must allow that no great reform was ever effected by satire or aided by vulgarity; and it is no injustice to him to affirm that the standpoint of the *Decameron* is essentially vulgar—mainly that of the Florentine *villan rifatto* (patched-up bumpkin) at whom Dante girds. While displaying a smug respect for rank and the 'guinea's stamp,' and for the etiquette and elegancies of genteel society, Boccaccio—to judge from his *Decameron*—seems to have been quite incapable of feeling any reverence for any noble sentiment or high aspiration—for patriotism, for self-sacrifice, for knightly honour, for maiden modesty, for true manliness. His attempts to depict good and pure women are grotesque and ridiculous failures, Griselda being one of the most ludicrous;<sup>2</sup> nor was he capable of enough generosity to perceive that amidst the undeniable corruption of the clerics the ideal of a saintly life found among them not a few true and humble followers.

From the merely 'literary' standpoint—which, be it said, is by no means necessarily that of the true lover of literature—Boccaccio's merits as writer bulk large. His 'artistic serious-

<sup>1</sup> The reaction that followed the emancipation of the human spirit from the bonds of medievalism caused for a time (as ever in such cases) a state of things worse than the first. Matteo Villani attributes the great outburst of immorality and luxury to the Plague; but it was due to far deeper causes.

<sup>2</sup> Even such an advocate as Mr. Hutton has to give up attempting to defend his client in regard to women.



## LITERATURE (1300-1400)

ness' from this point of view seems to eclipse his 'moral indifference,' and it must be admitted that, besides writing some very pretty verse, he has created, or re-created, a considerable number of characters that live and move and have their being. Carducci indeed perhaps with reason asserts that no writer after Dante and before Shakespeare created so many different types. Another feat of Boccaccio's was the introduction, or adaptation for literary purposes, of an Italian prose very different both from the earnest, almost solemn, organ-music of the *Vita Nuova* and from the rather ponderous and unarticulated prose of the historians. Boccaccio's narration has the lithe, graceful movement of a wild animal; or, to vary the metaphor, on the easy-flowing, sparkling, limpid current of his eloquence, with its changeful and often curious rhythms and its quaint sequences, it is exceedingly pleasant to float lazily down stream. At times the sensation is almost such as is produced by the musical cadences of some quiet, unimaginative narrative in the *Odyssey* or some playful passage in Plato.

The popularity of the *Decameron* was immediate, and for three centuries its influence on literature was great—far greater than that of Dante's Poem. Even Sacchetti, who was for 45 years a contemporary of Boccaccio, and whose three hundred *Novelle* were held to be no mean rivals of the Hundred Tales, lamenting in well-known lines the death of his master, couples his name with that of Dante himself—though between the two, as Mr. Symonds says, rolls a ninefold Styx. Now that Giovanni is dead, wails Sacchetti, all poetry is extinct, and 'empty are the mansions of Parnassus':

*E vuote son le case di Parnaso,*

## CHAPTER VII

### ART (1300-1400)

IN *Medieval Italy* I have traced the progress of Italian architecture, sculpture, and the pictorial art (painting and mosaics) from their first origins down to the days of Dante. Following the same method that was adopted in the case of Literature, I shall make no attempt to map out any further these three great currents, which now begin to gather many affluents and to extend and intertwine their systems, as it were, into one mighty network. It must suffice to give slight general outlines, to add a few general observations, and to select a few of the more important artists for nearer consideration. Such a method may seem to tend towards scrappiness and superficiality, but it has its advantages, one of which is that it helps one to 'locate' a few celebrities who may afterwards prove useful as landmarks whenever the right path gets lost in the jungles of art-history.

### PAINTING

The history of Italian painting during the Trecento is mainly the history of Giotto's works and those of his disciples. From Florence <sup>1</sup> the new influence spread through the Italian cities.

<sup>1</sup> The claims of Siena as against Florence have, I think, been much exaggerated (see *Medieval Italy*). The early Sienese painters, such as Guido, were mechanical workers in the old Byzantine school, and the only signs of 'revival' are imitations of Cimabue's and Giotto's new methods, as in Duccio's famous *Ancona*, and Lorenzetti's Pisan frescos, and Memmi's frescos in the Spanish Chapel—so belauded by Ruskin. By the way, the roof frescos in this chapel (perhaps by the Florentine Taddeo Gaddi, as Vasari says) seem to me, though slated by Ruskin, finer than the supposed Sienese work on the walls. For the Sienese painter Simone Martini, and his portrait of Laura, see p. 162 *n*. Works of his exist in the Palazzo Pubblico, Siena. He also painted at Naples

## ART (1300-1400)

In Rome, Naples, Padua, and Assisi, Giotto himself produced important works, and till the end of the century most of Italy, casting aside the old Byzantine style, was dependent on Giotto's followers, the so-called Giotteschi. But, as is ever the case, the followers vulgarized and weakened the master's teaching, and during the latter half of the century true art withered away again almost to the root. Then, in the early years of the Quattrocento, came Masaccio, who, as Leonardo da Vinci tells us, revived its almost perished vitality by a return to Nature and introduced that 'plastic style' which Vasari calls 'modern art,' and which some modern critics decry as ineffably unspiritual. This style, modified by the new love of joy and beauty felt by such painters as Filippo Lippi and Botticelli, reached its highest development in Raphael. Thus, with a few strokes, one may indicate the main river of Italian painting during about 200 years; but we have omitted many important tributaries, which will have to be inserted later, as well as a certain beautiful little lake 'lying apart from the great river and its affluents,' and symbolizing the earlier works of Fra Angelico.<sup>1</sup>

In his fine Latin epitaph, placed under Benedetto da Maiano's bust of the celebrated painter in the Florentine Duomo, Poliziano says that Giotto 'restored dead Painting to life.' To raise the dead is an act of creative power, and undoubtedly such power does sometimes alight amidst this earthly realm of natural law and defy all the rules of evolution. But the question here for us is whether the resuscitation of painting by Giotto was such a creative act—a break in natural evolution—or whether the popularity (the 'cry,' as Dante calls it) by which he drove his master Cimabue from the field was, as it so often is, merely the result of some attractive change of method.

and Assisi. A later Sienese painter, Sassetta (*d.* about 1400), is proved by Mr. Berenson to have produced work of very great originality and beauty.

<sup>1</sup> This metaphor is used by Mr. Symonds (*Renaissance in Italy*), but, as we shall see, in his later works even Angelico adopted Masaccio's method. A mighty affluent is, of course, Venice, which began to produce great painters towards the middle of the Quattrocento.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

Theories concerning the nature and end of art are mostly useless, except perhaps for those who evolve them; but if, like Plato, one is content to use words for what they may be worth in an attempt to intimate 'what cannot be imparted directly like a fact of science,' perhaps one may say without fear of serious contradiction that the true artist discerns reality, essence, life, soul, spirit—or whatever else we may call that which is the *thing itself* behind its appearance; and that he not only reveals this real thing to us, as the sculptor liberates from the rough marble the living form,<sup>1</sup> but can also 'add to nature' (the phrase is Shakespeare's) by creating new forms, which, like all natural objects, are imitations<sup>2</sup> of the ideally perfect, reminding us of the unseen and eternal, according to Plato's allegory. And for this the artist needs no scientific technique, no exquisite elaboration. It matters little, or nought, whether his method be that of pure line—shadowless, ethereal—or solid, plastic modelling with all the effects of chiaroscuro and aerial perspective.<sup>3</sup> From an old mouldering fresco, where here and there a flush of colour or a flash of gold alone remains to indicate, maybe, some splendid winged presence or some noble human form, one may at times gain as much as from the finest works of later artists.

Whether Giotto's art 'adds to nature,' or has any sort of apocalyptic message—or even gives approximately the *real thing*—are questions that every one must answer for himself, unless he prefers to leave them unanswered. The only deduction that I venture to make from what I have said is that to any one who holds views of this kind it must seem that a

<sup>1</sup> *Si come per levar si pone in pietra . . . una viva figura* (Michelangelo).

<sup>2</sup> Not, of course, realistic imitations, such as the famous 'fly of Giotto' which Cimabue, it is said, tried in vain to flick away from one of his own paintings. Plato condemns the products of art as 'twice removed from reality'—imitations of imitations. He is certainly right in the case of much that passes as art.

<sup>3</sup> According to Mr. Berenson, Oriental art is far greater than European as a revealer of spiritual reality. The Sienese painters, who 'tend to avoid modelling in the round and to procure their effects by pure line,' rise, according to this well-known authority, to a level considerably nearer the Chinaman than do other Italian artists.



## A R T (1300-1400)

great deal preserved in our art galleries might be removed very profitably to other museums, or used for upholstery purposes, and that a good deal would hardly be worth the cost of transport.

Let us now see what points of contact Giotto's life had with contemporary history. He was born (1276) when Dante was a boy of 11, and he survived him 15 years. While he was a child took place the Sicilian Vespers (1282) and the great naval defeat (1284) of the Pisans by the Genoese at Meloria, which one associates with the story of Ugolino. Then came the battle of Campaldino, in the Casentino, where the Tuscan Ghibellines were routed and where Dante fought in the ranks of the Florentine Guelfs—a battle the name of which ever revives anew in one's memory that most wonderful description by Dante of the fate of Buonconte's body—and soul. This victory opened up to Florence a great field of influence in Central Italy, and I think it must have been in the following year that Cimabue took his clever young apprentice, Giotto—whose skill in depicting sheep and flies had so smitten his fancy—to Assisi, to help him in painting frescos<sup>1</sup> in the Upper Church of S. Francesco. The lad was now about 14 years of age. It is incredible that (as some assert) he painted at this age, or even began to paint, the celebrated series of 28 scenes from the life of St. Francis—of which more later. This was probably not done until about 1296, and during a part at least of the six intervening years we may imagine him at Florence, where he doubtless made friendship with Dante, already well known as the author of the *Vita Nuova* and as a rising statesman. Then, in 1298, he was invited to Rome by Cardinal Stefaneschi, nephew of the notorious Boniface VIII. Here he probably remained until the autumn of 1300—for he seems to have been present at the Jubilee together with

<sup>1</sup> At least two generations of artists, as Crowe and Cavalcaselle say, had worked in the Upper Church before Giotto. To Cimabue we may attribute some of the once splendid frescos of the transept, which, although now dim shadows of their former glories, leave a lifelong impression on one's memory. Before 1290 Cimabue had also worked in the Lower Church, later decorated by Giotto and his pupils.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

his fellow-Florentines Giovanni Villani and Dante. (For the *Navicella* and portrait of Boniface see illustration in *Medieval Italy*. The Lateran frescos were destroyed by the fire of 1308, or were painted about 1330 and destroyed by the fire of 1360.) Perhaps he returned to Florence with Dante, who, having been Prior in the summer of the same year, had an official right to have his portrait inserted with other magnates in the Paradise fresco that Giotto—again perhaps—painted <sup>1</sup> in the chapel of the Bargello (Palace of the Podestà). Then took place the advent of Charles of Valois and the banishment of Dante. It was, I believe, just about this time (1302) that Giotto returned to Assisi and painted <sup>2</sup> the allegorical scenes on the vault above the saint's tomb; and he was perhaps still there, or might have been at Florence, when the disaster of the Ponte alla Carraia took place, in 1304 (see Chapter IV). A year or two later <sup>3</sup> we find him at Padua—a free Guelf city, soon to fall under the domination of the Carrara family—whither he was invited by a rich Paduan, named Scrovegno, who had built a chapel (the Madonna dell' Arena) and wished to have it decorated with frescos. And it happened—says Benvenuto da Imola, writing in the year 1376—that while Giotto was engaged with these frescos (1306) Dante visited Padua and was his guest; and it is interesting to note a fact that may have been a little embarrassing, namely that just

<sup>1</sup> There are difficulties about this, now greatly altered, portrait of Dante. If painted, as C. and C. think, before 1302, why the pomegranate in Dante's hand (before restoration)? He had not begun the *Inferno*, unless Boccaccio's story about the first seven cantos is, after all, true. Some see Charles of Valois in the fresco; but he came to Florence in November 1301, and was scarcely likely to be associated with Dante, his political foe. After the chapel was burnt in 1337 the fresco was evidently repainted entirely.

<sup>2</sup> Recent criticism attributes these frescos to Giotto's followers, but the reasons given seem inadequate.

<sup>3</sup> The story of Giotto's visit to Avignon is confuted in Crowe and Cavalcaselle's book by an equally legendary assertion, that Benedict XI engaged him to paint at Avignon (about 1305), but that the engagement was cancelled by the Pope's death. Benedict XI had nothing to do with Avignon. It was the wine-bibber Benedict XII, 31 years later, who invited Giotto to decorate his new-built Palais des Papes; and the engagement was cancelled by the death (*morte interveniente*, says Albertini) of Giotto himself.

## ART (1300-1400)

about this time Dante was writing the passage in which he condemns to a most unpleasant place in Hell the father of Giotto's patron, and condemns him also to eternal ridicule by the grotesque similitude of an ox licking its nose (*Purg.* xvii).

While Giotto was still at Padua the Papacy was removed (1308) to Avignon by Clement V, and Robert of Anjou ascended the throne of Naples. After Padua we hear of him at Ferrara and Ravenna and Verona, painting frescos (which have all perished) in Franciscan churches.<sup>1</sup> Then, being already a well-to-do person, he improved the family property in the Mugello (the valley of the Sieve, some 15 miles north-east of Florence) and made it his home, whence he often visited Florence; but probably art was practised under difficulties, for the times were stormy. Henry of Luxemburg had descended on Italy, and though the German monarch had been bravely defied by Florence, which he attempted to besiege, the Florentines soon afterwards suffered a very serious overthrow at Montecatini by the Ghibelline *condottiere* Uguccione (1315), and ten years later by Castracane at Altopascio. Many of the frescos painted at this period, such as those of the Baroncelli Chapel (Santa Croce), have been ruthlessly destroyed, and it was only some 60 years ago that the now once-more admired wall-pictures in the Bardi and Peruzzi Chapels were at last liberated from their coating of *intonaco* and ruthlessly repainted. The immense industry of the man, as well as his astonishing facility in production, is proved by the multitudinous lost works, including panel pictures, which are mentioned by early writers, besides all that still survives.

In 1330 Giotto was invited to Naples by King Robert, whose authority in the Regno and even at Rome had been re-established after the inglorious *Römerzug* of Ludwig the Bavarian; and before Naples was left, in 1334, Boccaccio had perhaps arrived there. (For the frescos painted by Giotto at Naples see Chapter II.)

At Florence in 1333 had taken place the great inundation

<sup>1</sup> Vasari mentions a portrait of Can Grande, who did not become Signor till 1312.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

which swept away the bridges and damaged much else. The enthusiasm by which the Florentines were inspired not only to repair these losses but to beautify their city still more resulted in a decision of the Signoria to appoint Giotto, 'our great and dear master,' chief architect of the new Duomo and to entrust him with the erection of the Campanile—about which a few remarks will be made in the sections on architecture and sculpture. This great and noble work occupied the last two or three years of his life, except during a visit to Azzo Visconti at Milan, where he painted frescos, no longer extant, in the old ducal palace (Palazzo di Corte) on the site of which now stands the 18th-century Palazzo Reale, near the Duomo.

Giotto's artistic activity extended over more than 40 years. I can but select one or two facts to illustrate what I said about the methods and the end of his art. A glance at any of his less-restored pictures (except such very early work as the *Madonna* of the Florentine Accademia) reveals not only the new scheme of 'luminous colour, soft outlines, spacious lights, glazed and rosy flesh-tints,' and other devices described by modern experts and adopted by the followers of Giotto, and from them by the Renaissance painters, but makes us conscious of a totally new method of presentment. We see that the painter tries with some success to represent an event dramatically by interplay of action and facial expression. There is the intention to make the picture an artistic unity.<sup>1</sup> These entirely new methods are very perceptible in the famous 28 episodes from the life of St. Francis painted

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* not merely a scene cut out, as it were, from a narrative. A real picture differs from decorative painting as a statue from a bas-relief. Giotto's powers of dramatic representation are very notable, his actors being sometimes almost as few and as fully employed as in a play of Aeschylus. He seldom introduces dummies and supernumeraries, such as annoy one so in many later works of Italian art. One might perhaps ask whether such dramatic characteristics, essential in the case of a single work of art, are not out of place in a series of architecturally decorative paintings—such as those in the Upper Church at Assisi, or in the chapel of the Paduan Arena. And the same applies, perhaps, to mosaics. Certainly Giotto's design for the mosaic of the *Navicella* (in the portico of St. Peter's at Rome) proves that he did not realize the essentials—whatever they may be—of the grand style in mosaic decoration.





12. GIOTTO'S CAMPANILE



13. (a) FROM ANDREA PISANO'S BAPTISTERY DOOR



(b) ESPOUSAL OF THE VIRGIN, BY ORCAGNA

## ART (1300-1400)

(c. 1296) in the Upper Church of Assisi, and it can be easily believed that the 'cry' with which they were greeted was loud and universal; nor would any one, I suppose, venture to deny that Giotto's introduction of these new methods was of very great importance; moreover, although he was ignorant, they say, of anatomy and the laws of perspective,<sup>1</sup> there can be no doubt that he possessed a wonderful sense of form and very great skill and facility in draughtsmanship—a fact well illustrated by the story of 'Giotto's O,' and far better by the exquisite grace of his Campanile.

But was all this pictorial skill put to a really high use? Do any of his paintings impress themselves on the memory and win our love by having revealed to us what I tried to express by 'reality,' 'spirit'—or 'the thing itself'? There may be some who can point to such works of his—possibly the Biblical and legendary scenes at Padua, or those in the Sagrestia at Rome—and even some who feel deeply affected and illuminated by the ethical-allegorical scenes and figures in the Lower Church at Assisi and in the chapel of the Paduan Arena. But I think it is not unfair to accept, so to speak, the gage thrown down by Giotto himself. A very great deal of his work was done for Franciscan churches, and he evidently regarded it as his special mission to illustrate the life of the saint; nor can one deny that he did depict a great number of events, more or less legendary, which went towards composing the traditional, monkish, supernatural 'Life' of one who would be consternated if he could read some of his orthodox biographers; but does Giotto on any occasion, either in his 28 youthful essays at Assisi (not to mention the really painful apotheosis scene) or in his much later six frescos of the Bardi Chapel in Sta Croce, give us anything that reveals the real character and the real teaching of St. Francis? I can only think of

<sup>1</sup> Some 35 years earlier Niccolò Pisano, in his Pisan pulpit, had carved the human figure exquisitely; but one must remember that he copied ancient sculptures, whereas the painters had no such models. The laws of linear perspective were mainly discovered (or re-discovered?) by Paolo Uccello, the Florentine painter (1397-1475). Giotto's figures are mostly enveloped in very heavy drapery of simple, not undignified, but very un-Greek treatment.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

one, much faded, fresco at Assisi—possibly by Giotto—which gives me any such help. It represents the saint surrounded by his birds—evidently at the Carceri, with the blue Chiaggio valley in the background. And if we turn from his Franciscan frescos to the Biblical and ‘proto-evangelium’ scenes of the chapel of the Arena,<sup>1</sup> although here and there we find dignity and beauty—as in the ‘Christ enthroned’—and are amazed at the development which Giotto’s new dramatic method and technical skill had already attained, who of us can truthfully say that those of the frescos which depict, for instance, the last scenes of Christ’s life help one in any way towards a clearer perception of the purpose of that life and that death? And is this due to want of skill or to *naïveté*? Is it not perhaps due to a lack of that spiritual insight, or that revealing power, of which we spoke?

One of the truest observations made by Leonardo da Vinci in his most interesting Tractate on Painting is that the real value of Giotto’s revival of painting was due (as all progress in thought and in art has ever been due) to a return to nature. After Giotto, he adds, art degenerated once more *by the imitation of pictures*, until Tommaso of Florence (Masaccio) once more led it back to the ‘mistress of all masters.’ And yet the works of some of the Giotteschi—such as the two Gaddi, Orcagna, and Lorenzo Monaco at Florence, and various painters who adopted Giottesque methods, such as Traini of Pisa and Simone Martini, Filippo Memmi and the Lorenzetti of Siena—are very interesting to the art-student, not only on account of the often unquestionable beauty and skill of their colouring and draughtsmanship but also because this Tuscan school of painting, which originated at Florence, dominated for the rest of the century the whole of Italy. Giottesque frescos are to be found in many Italian churches. Among them of special note are the remarkable paintings in the Church of the

<sup>1</sup> The restorations have been so ruthless that one hesitates to judge Giotto by these frescos, but many of them present the same kind of unattractive, unspiritual *faces* that one finds at Assisi and Florence—indicating hopelessly hidebound superstition, and not rarely even grossness.



## ART (1300-1400)

Incoronata at Naples<sup>1</sup> and the well-known *Triumph of Death* and other most curious frescos (of about 1350—for some are evidently influenced by the *Decameron*) on the south wall of the Pisan Campo Santo, which were long attributed to Orcagna, but are now thought to be by the Pisan Traini, or by some Sienese master. (The Lorenzetti seem to have died in 1348, of the plague.) Also in Florence, in Sta Croce and Sta Maria Novella (Strozzi Chapel and the 'Spanish Chapel'), we have fine specimens of the work of the Giotteschi.

In order to understand the nature and to estimate justly the progress of Italian painting during the Trecento we should bear in mind the state of things, political and social, in the various Italian cities—as, for instance, the state of things under King Robert of Naples and the terrible condition of Rome caused by party and family feuds, by frequent bloody revolutions, and by the troubles connected with the 'Babylonish Captivity' as well as by the subsequent 'Schism.' We must remember too the state of Milan under the Visconti and the state of Venice, constantly at war with Genoa, and often agitated by internal disorders. And it may be useful to reflect how it was that Florence during this century, amidst its incessant feuds and revolutions and wars—to say nothing of flood and pestilence—should have given rise directly and indirectly to such an immense amount of painting in which is discernible scarcely any evidence of the political and social conditions under which it was produced. Doubtless the cause was that the artist of the Trecento, even more than the architect, was in the service of the priests and was occupied almost exclusively with 'sacred' subjects. These included a vast amount of legendary matter, often of the most grotesque character, as well as imaginary scenes of supernal bliss and those terrible conceptions of infernal torment which a great poet had indeed used successfully, but which even those who, as theologians, would eternalize agony must allow

<sup>1</sup> Built by Joanna I in 1352. See Chap. II, or Index. The subject of the (now mutilated) frescos was the Seven Sacraments, and especially Joanna's marriage with the assassin of her husband.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

to lie outside the domain of painting, and still further distant from sculpture. The huge and repulsive frescos of Hell and its torments,<sup>1</sup> which are a distinctive feature of this period, were doubtless primarily meant as bugbears by which the priests might exploit popular superstition; but they seem also to have won general approval as works of art.

These and other facts connected with the art of this period may well suggest many thoughts as to the then state of things, not only political and social, but also religious—both in the ordinary and in the higher sense of that word. And these thoughts will help us to understand the great outburst of joy that soon afterwards greeted what was believed to be the dawn of eternal liberation from the superstitions and grotesqueness of medievalism.

### SCULPTURE

In my former volume have been discussed several interesting problems connected with the revival of sculpture by Niccolò Pisano. This revival—founded on ancient Roman models—preceded that of painting by something like 40 years, and differed from it essentially. Niccolò went back to classical models. Giotto had no such models for his pictures, and, as Leonardo da Vinci tells us, went back to nature; and, *pace* the poet Pope, it is not quite true that to copy Homer—or other classical models, however exquisite—is to copy nature. The reliefs carved by Niccolò on his famous pulpits at Pisa and Siena are more beautiful in the individual figures than anything produced by the new, non-classical, Italian sculpture in its early stages; but in spite of their imitated perfection of form these reliefs lack that ‘composition’ or ‘organic

<sup>1</sup> All who know Orcagna's *Paradiso* in the Strozzi Chapel, in which he has so wonderfully lent to one brief moment ‘the calm of blest eternity,’ must rejoice that he—the greatest of the Giotteschi—greater, perhaps, than, Giotto himself—has been acquitted of having perpetrated the Pisan horrors; but the enormous and horrible *Inferno* opposite his beautiful *Paradiso* in the Strozzi Chapel, even if he did not help his brother to paint it, must have won his approval. By the way, Vasari relates that one Giottesco, Spinello by name, who had depicted Satan as a more than usually hideous monster, was visited by the indignant Fiend and died of fright.

## ART (1300-1400)

unity,' or whatever else one may call it, which is so essential to all true art and the absence of which makes them differ so inexpressibly from, say, the Parthenon frieze—whereas the works of some early successors of Niccolò, in spite of their generally clumsy and often inaccurate forms, contain not rarely the vital elements of that new art<sup>1</sup> which found its highest development in Ghiberti, Verrocchio, Donatello, and Michelangelo.

Another point to be noted in regard to the new Italian (Tuscan) sculpture is that it did not begin, as ancient Greek sculpture began, with the attempt to produce *statues*. With the Greek the primary object was to produce an image of a deity, whereas down to Donatello Italian sculpture—with rare exceptions<sup>2</sup>—was subsidiary to architecture and consisted mainly in relief work, either carved in stone or cast in bronze. The difference between relief and statue is, as I have already remarked, of the same character as the difference between an epic episode and a drama. Sculpture being in its essence more concentrated—more limited to the moment, more strictly subject to the so-called dramatic unities—than any other art, finds its highest and fullest attainment in the single statue. The relief, like the 'short story'—like the epic episode—may attain pathos (as it certainly does in the beautiful Athenian tombstones), but perhaps there has never been any such stone or bronze picture, so to speak, which, however successful as architectural decoration, has succeeded, I do not say in rivaling a fine statue, but in being quite satisfactory as a work of art—with the one exception, perhaps, of the frieze of the Parthenon, which, as one walked round the temple, gave the impression of an endless procession.

<sup>1</sup> Good examples of this are Andrea Pisano's Campanile reliefs and his bronze Baptistry door.

<sup>2</sup> Even in Lombard architecture there are the well-known lions supporting columns and other sculpture nearly in the round. At Lucca we have an equestrian quasi-statue of St. Martin (13th century). But I here speak of the new Italian sculpture, which till Donatello did not attempt the statue *as a complete and independent work of art*. Even the equestrian statue of Can Grande is not that, nor are the pulpit and façade statues by Andrea Pisano and others.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

Giovanni, the son of Niccolò Pisano, gained notoriety by the part that he took in the many architectural works of his father as well as in two famous works of sculpture—the Siena pulpit and the great Fountain at Perugia. Like Arnolfo di Cambio, his elder fellow-pupil, he distinguished himself chiefly as an architect, but as a sculptor he is important, for, as may be seen in his *capolavoro*, the splendid pulpit in Sant' Andrea at Pistoia (in its main design like that of Pisa), he possessed a skill nearly equal to his father's in the imitation of classical figures and drapery. But he aspired to be more than an imitator: he endeavoured to inspire these figures with a life, a movement, and a meaning of their own: his angels and saints and patriarchs are not, like those of Niccolò on the Pisan pulpit, simply Olympian deities and classic heroes. The Pistoian pulpit is perhaps more deserving than the Pisan to be called 'the Ark from which issued forth the great Tuscan sculptors.'

And the first to issue forth was Giovanni's pupil, Andrea of Pisa, a contemporary and friend of Giotto. It was not until 1330, or thereabouts, when he was some 57 years of age, and Giotto 54, that he completed the great work which secured him his title to fame—the east (now the south) bronze double-door of the Florentine Baptistery.<sup>1</sup> The 20 upper panels of this door give episodes from the life of the Baptist; in the 8 lower are allegorical figures of the Virtues. To note the difference between this work of Andrea and that of Niccolò in his Pisan pulpit is exceedingly interesting. One is struck at once by the fact that, though the figures are far superior to anything produced by any Italian predecessor of Niccolò, they have no such imitated classical beauty of form as is seen in the work of Niccolò. Indeed they are inclined to the

<sup>1</sup> Some assert that he took (as certainly Ghiberti did for each of his doors) over twenty years; others say only six years. In case it be true that the commission was given him in January 1330, he had finished the model (according to the inscription on the door) in less than a single year, but there were difficulties about the casting. It was not completed until 1336. Each of the three double-doors was first erected in the east portal—the one facing the Duomo and flanked with the ancient prophety columns, which now stand a little aside, like pensioned veterans, unemployed.



## ART (1300-1400)

clumsiness and the angularity of an art still struggling for technical accomplishment, and they are all presented on the same, or nearly the same, plane. But there is a sincerity and a vitality in them which is incomparably more valuable than any borrowed grace. The episode is told with the fewest possible figures and with the simplest means—with *naïveté* perhaps, but without a trace of grotesqueness. One feels that here there is something revealed—that one has some glimpse of a reality that is 'behind appearance.'

Nor is it less interesting to compare this earliest Baptistry door with that made some 70 years later by Ghiberti (Fig. 14). Here we are struck by the fact that, except for a certain additional grace and a slight inclination towards 'picturesqueness,' the method of Ghiberti was, in this *first* door of his, practically the same as that of Andrea; that is to say, in spite of the influence of Orcagna, Ghiberti persistently retained the simple and noble style of Andrea until—well, until that happened, between the making of his *first* and his *second* door, which, if we may speak thus of what *crevit occulto velut arbor aevo*, we may call the beginning of the Renaissance—an event that we must reserve for consideration in some later chapter.

To return to Andrea Pisano—it might seem likely that in this great work of his he should have received the advice of his friend Giotto, but modern critics reject Vasari's statement that the designs were furnished by Giotto; and certainly if we compare them with those that were indubitably furnished to Andrea by Giotto for most of the 27 lower reliefs inserted in his Campanile we shall note very essential differences. These celebrated reliefs—except about half a dozen, which tradition perhaps rightly attributes to Giotto's own workmanship—were executed by Andrea, who after Giotto's death, in 1336 or 1337, was chosen by the Arte della Lana to succeed him as architect of the Campanile—and perhaps also of the Duomo itself.<sup>1</sup> To this work he probably devoted the rest of his

<sup>1</sup> Andrea probably furnished statues and other carvings for the Duomo façade during Giotto's superintendence, or his own. One of these *may* be the

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

life, although some assert that his successor, Talenti, was put in his place<sup>1</sup> as early as 1342. The Campanile was decorated also with statues, the oldest of which may be the work of Andrea; but the finest are by Donatello, to whom we shall come when we reach the Quattrocento. Between Andrea Pisano and that wonderful group to which Donatello belonged (Della Quercia, Ghiberti, Brunelleschi, and others) there were some good Florentine carvers, as is testified by portions of the side portals of the Duomo—such as the ‘Madonna of the Pigeons,’ near the Campanile, the Porta dei Canonici (south side) and the fine Porta della Mandorla (north), both of which were designed by Giovanni d’Ambrogio. But there is no sign in these carvings of anything but decorative dexterity.

Very different indeed is one most notable work of sculpture that was produced during the ten years (1349–1359) that followed Andrea’s death. It is the work of one whom we have already noted as perhaps the greatest of the Giotteschi painters, namely Orcagna, who, by the way, besides being a poet was no mean mosaic artist and architect, if it be true that he decorated the Orvieto Duomo’s façade with sculptures and mosaics and designed the Loggia dei Signori, now known under the humiliating name ‘La Loggia de’ Lanzi’—i.e. the loggia of the German Lancers of Duke Cosimo I. Orcagna had studied sculpture under Andrea Pisano and belonged to the Guild of Carvers, and when, the year after the Great Plague, during which many miraculous cures had taken place, it was decided to construct a Tabernacle for the wonder-working Madonna of Orsanmichele<sup>2</sup> the work was put in his hands.

statue of Boniface VIII that has lately been placed inside the cathedral. See illustration in *Medieval Italy*. It is here impossible to discuss the Campanile reliefs. A very full description is given in *The Shepherd’s Tower* by Mr. Ruskin.

<sup>1</sup> Vasari asserts that the ‘Duke of Athens’ (who played the tyrant in Florence in 1342–1343) employed Andrea much in building palaces, fortresses, etc. After this he and his son Nino were engaged on the Orvieto façade, where the Madonna statue over the main portal is certainly by him.

<sup>2</sup> The interesting history of this church may be indicated as follows. The ancient oratory of S. Michele in Orto (‘in the Garden’—like the Madonna dell’

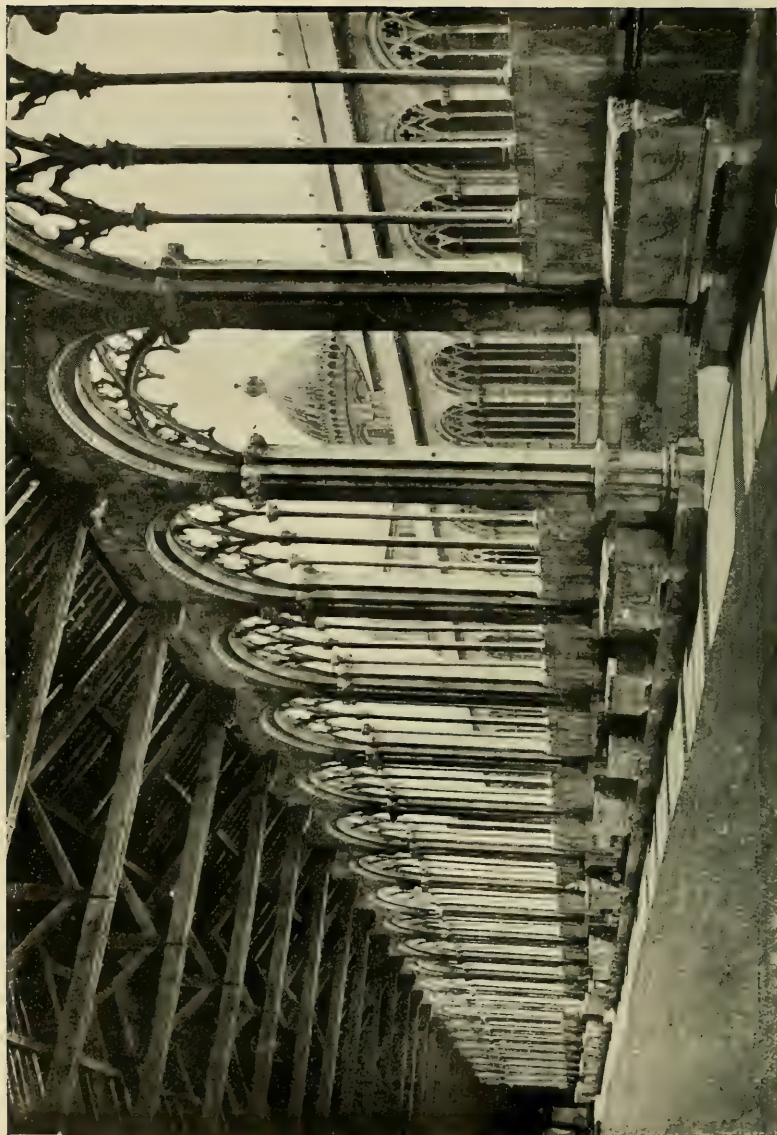


(a) FROM Ghiberti's FIRST BAPTISTERY DOOR



(b) FROM Ghiberti's SECOND BAPTISTERY DOOR





15. CAMPO SANTO, PISA



## ART (1300-1400)

This great Tabernacle, within which is preserved the ancient Ikon, is a miracle of carving and inlay work in marbles and precious stones and metal. It is adorned with pinnacles and pilasters and statues and a picture (perhaps by Orcagna); but of greatest value are the marble reliefs round the base. Some of these scenes from the Virgin's life, such as the *Spoza-lisio* (Fig. 13 (a)), are of exquisite beauty and most interesting as the finest specimens of the new Italian sculpture produced after Andrea Pisano's Campanile and Baptistery reliefs and Ghiberti's first Baptistery door.

It will have been noted that although Pisa gave birth to the founders of the new sculpture it was Florence that fostered them. As in the case of painting, so also in regard to sculpture and architecture, the rest of Italy was mostly dependent on Florence—or anyhow on Tuscany—during the Trecento. One important exception is, as usual, Venice; for in sculpture, as in painting and architecture, Venice was influenced late by the mainland and gave a new style many Venetian characteristics. Thus quite at the end of the Trecento came the beginning of that splendid monument-sculpture for which Venice became celebrated. However, in the first half of the Trecento (c. 1320-1350) there were produced at Venice some very fine Gothic sculptures, such as the carvings (Adam and Eve, Noah, etc.) on the lower arcade of the Doges' Palace. At Verona too we find interesting though rude equestrian statues—those of Can Grande and Mastino II—which prove the early existence of a native school of sculpture.

Orto at Venice) was demolished in 1284 to make place for a market, in midst of which Arnolfo di Cambio built a Loggia for the *Arti*. On a pillar of this a painted Madonna won such adoration by its cures that a society of rich Florentines was formed to sing hymns (*laudi*) in her honour daily. The Loggia was burnt when much of the middle city was destroyed by fire, 1304, on the occasion of the great riot (see p. 97). But the Madonna survived, and in 1337 the present church, with granary above, was begun. The hymn-singers (*Laudesi*), who had control of the inside of the church, commissioned Orcagna in 1349 to build the Tabernacle. Some explain the *Or* as *orreo* (Lat. *horreum*), i.e. grain-store.

# ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

## ARCHITECTURE

The origins and the nature of Gothic, and its essential differences from Romanesque, are briefly discussed in *Medieval Italy*, in which volume lists and illustrations of some of the principal early Italian Gothic buildings are given. I there showed that the use of the pointed arch, or broken arc,<sup>1</sup> with the new developments which it made possible in roof-vaulting, gables, and other constructive features, was known in Italy at an early period, and that there are two quite distinct types of 'Italian Gothic,' namely, native and imported.

Of the imported Gothic we have early specimens in the flying-buttressed S. Andrea at Vercelli (perhaps by an English architect), and in the little S. M. della Spina at Pisa (French Gothic), and, rather later, the Duomo and other churches at Naples.<sup>2</sup> Then, still later, there is the magnificent example of Milan Cathedral; moreover, we find many cases (as the Lucca Duomo and that of Prato) where the old Romanesque building has been rebuilt or has received important additions, such as choirs and façades, in what the more patriotic Italian architects despised as *lo stile Arabo-tedesco di corrotto gusto*.

And certainly Northern Gothic, especially German Gothic, had features that naturally offended the Italian sense for the beauty of pure form. The enormous piles poised aloft, as we see them in Northern Gothic cathedrals, required a carefully balanced structure with such devices as great flying

<sup>1</sup> The pointed arch is, as every one knows, found in Saracen and Sicilian-Norman architecture, and elsewhere. See *Medieval Italy*, pp. 436, 446, 528 *seq.* As soon as the top of an arch no longer consists in a continuous curve—as soon as the ascending curve breaks and a new curve has to be begun for the descent (as seen in the illustration, p. 200)—a new principle of infinite possibilities is admitted.

<sup>2</sup> S. Lorenzo, Naples, was built probably by Charles of Anjou's French architects after the victory of Benevento (1266), and the Duomo about 1272. The many Gothic tombs in Naples (as that of King Robert, for instance) were doubtless by Northern architects—or copied from Northern models, like the Cosmati tombs.

buttresses and mighty piers of clustered shafts, so that the thrust on vaults and arches and walls should be neutralized. Now this system of balance, with all its structural devices requisite for equipoise, did not appeal to the highest artistic instincts of the Italians. It perhaps produced in them a sensation of discomfort—of malaise and anxiety—to notice that from within these buildings the necessary external supports were invisible. But what made them regard the German Gothic as a debased style (*uno stile corrotto*) was doubtless the fact that (as happened also in English Gothic) essential construction had become so disfigured or concealed by masses of 'ornamentation'—by crockets and carvings and all kinds of useless and inartistic decoration<sup>1</sup>—that the true form—that form which in a building, as in a flower, manifests vital energy and alone lends it true beauty—was ruined.

By the beginning of the Trecento most of the purely Italian Gothic churches had been built, or begun. The main characteristics of these have been pointed out in my former volume, so we have here only to note the completion of some of them—such as the Florentine Duomo—and the florid, non-Italian, Gothic<sup>2</sup> additions to others—such as the Duomo of Siena and that of Orvieto, on the façades of which, as we have already seen, Giovanni and Andrea Pisano and Orcagna were employed. Then, compelled, alas! to leave almost unnoticed the Gothic *palazzi* and *rocche* and *castelli* of Tuscany and Lombardy—which are often fine examples of the true Italian style<sup>3</sup>—I shall only be able to add a few words on Milan Cathedral and on the most interesting subject of Venetian Gothic.

The designer of the Florentine Duomo was Arnolfo, son of

<sup>1</sup> There is nothing more exquisite than the best kinds of Gothic ornamentation when subordinated to construction.

<sup>2</sup> Some of these 'additions' are, as all must confess, of great beauty. Thus Giovanni Pisano's Gothic arcade for the Pisan Campo Santo (designed as early as 1270) is decidedly Northern in its style, but of exquisite grace and simplicity. The façade of Orvieto, on the other hand, is a gorgeous patchwork with no vital form.

<sup>3</sup> See list, *Medieval Italy*, p. 532.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

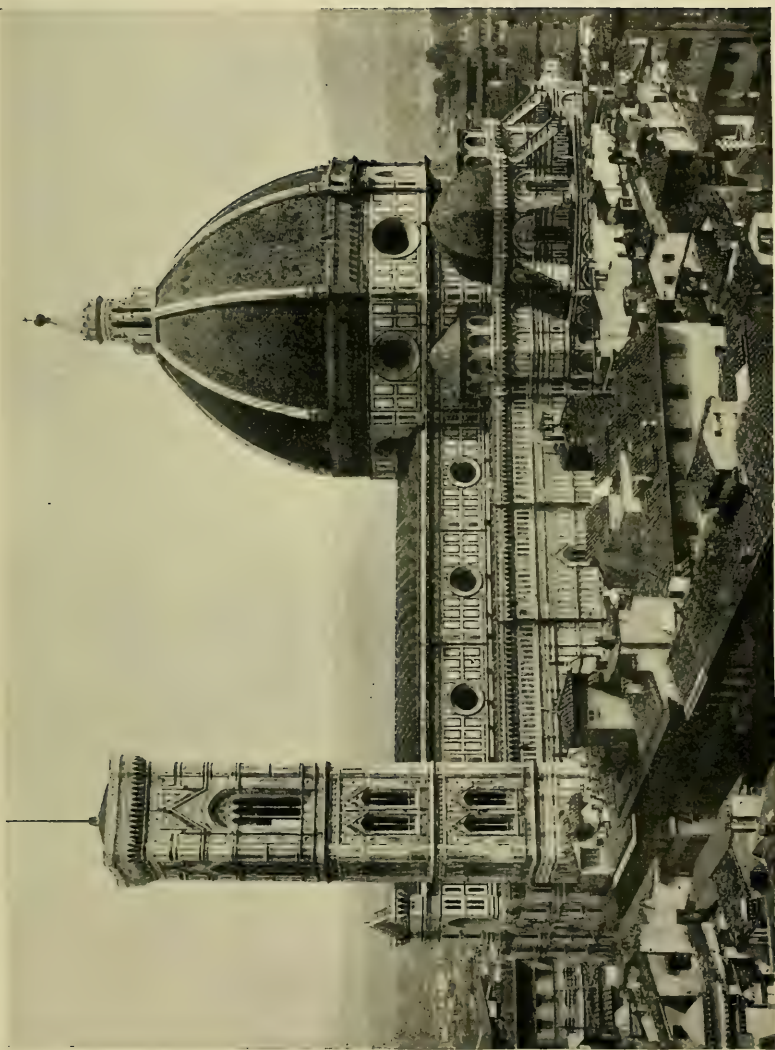
Cambio, a native of Colle, in Val d'Elsa, not far from San Gimignano.<sup>1</sup> He was, it is believed, a pupil of Niccolò Pisano, and when a man of about 34 he worked with his master at the Siena pulpit together with Giovanni Pisano, then a lad of 16 or so. In 1280 he was chosen, as we have seen, to build the Loggia of the new market-place on the site of San Michele in Orto. In 1285 he probably built the Badia—the church of that 'Abbey' whose ancient campanile, as Dante says, used to give 'tierce and nones' to Florence. (Arnolfo's Badia has entirely disappeared, together with frescos by Giotto and Masaccio.) About 1294 he designed and began Sta Croce, and some four years later received the commission to build for the Priors a great stronghold, since they did not feel themselves safe enough in the Palazzo dei Cerchi.<sup>2</sup> Arnolfo was compelled, it is said, to cramp his design because forbidden to make use of the site on which the houses of the Uberti—the great Ghibelline foes of the Republic—had stood; so the enormous pile of the Palazzo Vecchio (Fig. 3), as the palace of the Priors and the Signoria is now called, was meant by its architect to have been still vaster; and what immense energy and mental power the man possessed is seen from the fact that when he undertook this gigantic task he was already (since 1296) engaged in carrying out his design for a new Duomo.

According to old chroniclers the Cathedral of Florence in the time of St. Ambrose and S. Zenobius (*d.* 424) was the little church of San Salvatore, remnants of the façade of which may still be seen in the small Piazza dell' Olio. When by the prayers of Zenobius and the army of Stilicho the city was saved from Radegast and his barbarian hordes, a church was dedicated to the martyr Sta Reparata, on whose feast-day the event took place. Many centuries later (1128) this church was made the Cathedral, and it was on the site of this demolished

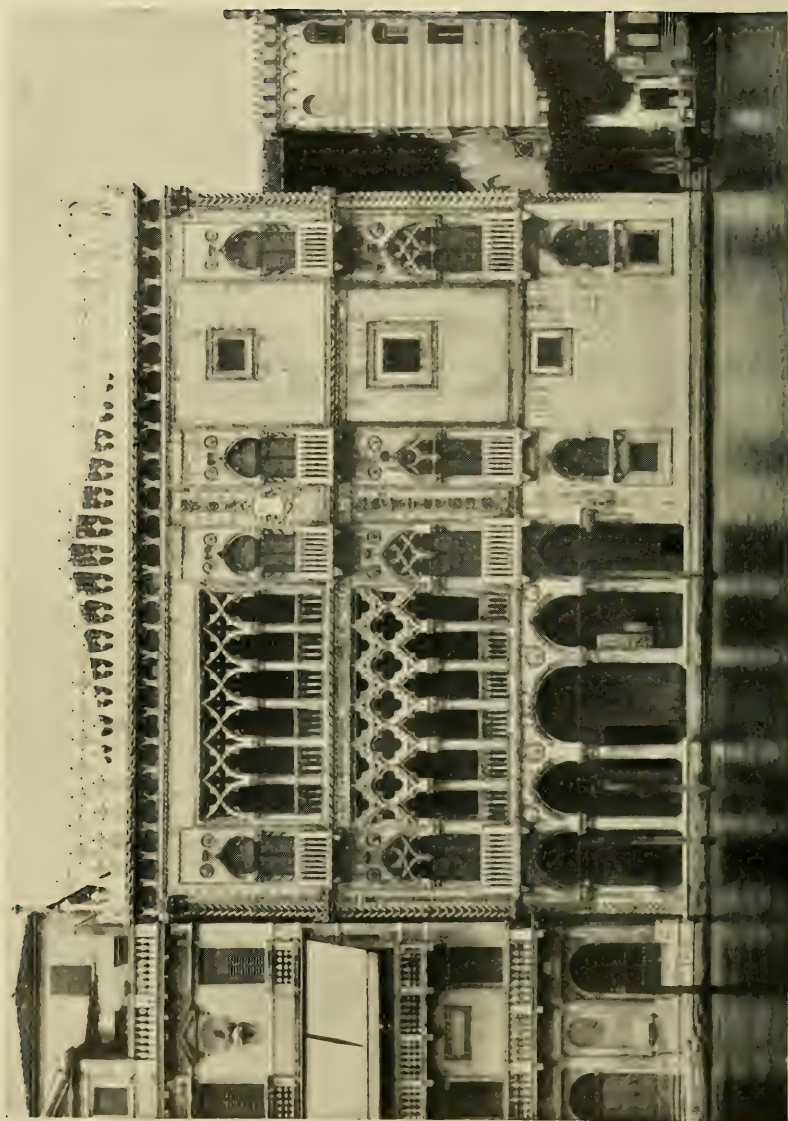
<sup>1</sup> Vasari calls him son of Lapo, who, he says, was a German. This seems indubitably one of Vasari's many blunders. He is rather fond of attributing architectural works to nameless *Tedeschi* (Germans).

<sup>2</sup> Still recognizable in the Vicolo dei Cerchi, to north of the great Piazza. Dante must have been one of the first Priors who used the new palace, for it was first ready in 1299.





16. THE CATHEDRAL, FLORENCE



17. CA' D'ORO, VENICE

## ART (1300-1400)

church that Arnolfo's new Santa Reparata was begun, very probably on lines somewhat like, but grander than, those of Sta Croce. After Arnolfo's death (1310?) the work seems almost to have ceased for some 20 years. The great flood of 1333 called forth much building enthusiasm, and Giotto, who then began the Campanile, may have also forwarded the execution of Arnolfo's design. Giotto was succeeded as Duomo architect by Andrea Pisano, and then the office was entrusted to a certain Francesco Talenti. This man seems to have remodelled—or rather to have abandoned—the design of Arnolfo. The present cathedral is probably almost entirely his creation—except, of course, Brunelleschi's mighty dome, of which we shall hear more later. The size of the building is much greater than one is apt to believe when one cranes one's neck to obtain a view from some adjacent street corner; and to those who are accustomed only to the Gothic of Northern cathedrals the general effect of this mountain of vari-coloured marble surmounted by a huge reddish-brown dome and adorned with florid Gothic windows and portals set amidst the rectangular patterns of its mural decorations is often rather disconcerting, in spite of the admiration that it excites.<sup>1</sup> As for the gorgeous modern façade, there is in the world probably no better object-lesson to be got on the subject of the false and the true in art than that which one is offered when one stands near Andrea Pisano's Baptistry door and faces the façade and the Campanile. The interior of the Duomo (since 1360 called S. Maria del Fiore, *i.e.* 'of the Florentine lily') is disappointing. The nave, with its four great, slightly pointed arches, appears shorter than that of many a far smaller Northern church, and the general impression made by the cavernous gloom and the nakedness of the greenish-brown walls and vaults is decidedly dreary.

To the brief notices that have been already given of buildings erected, rebuilt, or completed during the Trecento in the

<sup>1</sup> The surface decoration with coloured marble (so effective in Byzantine architecture) was perhaps not happily used in Tuscan Romanesque, and certainly not in Italian Gothic.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

pure Italian Gothic and the imported Gothic styles—such as the Cathedrals of Siena and Orvieto—might be added interesting details about many others—such as San Petronio at Bologna (the rival of S. Maria del Fiore), Sant' Anastasia at Verona, the Duomo of Como (rebuilt in Gothic about 1395), the Gothic Campanile and the Palaces of Siena, those of Lucca and Cremona, and the huge Castello of the Visconti, afterwards destroyed. But I must now pass on to Milan, and thence to Venice.

The founding of Milan Cathedral by Gian Galeazzo Visconti towards the end of the Trecento (1386) has been related in Chapter III. The history of its development under innumerable master-builders during the following centuries will perhaps occupy our attention on some future occasion. As far as the Trecento is concerned, it will suffice to say that its earliest architects seem to have been Italians. But they were indubitably schooled in ultramontane Gothic, for the vast pile shows little sign of the essential characteristics of true Italian Gothic. The general proportions of the magnificent and solemn interior and the wondrous traceries of the mighty windows are indeed exceedingly beautiful, and this we may without hesitation put down to the credit of the Italian masters; but there is surely not elsewhere in Europe, not even in Germany, anything that for grandiose falsity and fatuity—for extravagant excrescence and superfluity of useless and disfiguring decorative devices—can rival the exterior of the building, with its hundreds of pinnacles, its thousands of statues, its countless and useless high-flying buttresses that themselves need propping—to say nothing of its late-Renaissance, barocco façade. The deception, too, of the interior roof with its *painted* tracery of groined vaulting is doubtless due to Germanic influences such as have produced in our day the great *painted imitation-mosaics* (!) at Speyer. But, in spite of one's resentment at such trickery, it is impossible, when one enters, not to feel almost overwhelmed by the grandeur of the nave and choir and the many-columned aisles.



## VENETIAN GOTHIC

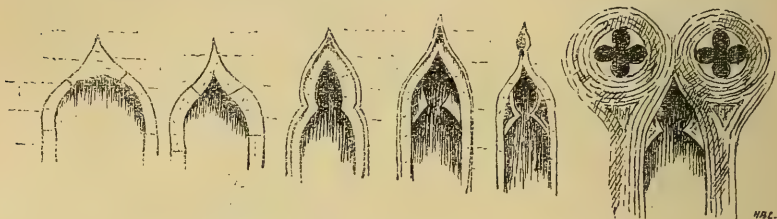
Venice during many centuries was, on account of its insular position and its important Eastern commerce, strongly affected by Eastern influences, and in matters political, literary, and artistic stood aloof from mainland Italy. In very early days it adopted the Byzantine style, and this style (which we find also on the island of Torcello and at Ravenna) prevailed down to the coming of the Gothic in the Trecento. The Lombard Romanesque style of architecture was not introduced until late (c. 1150), and the few buildings it produced, such as the Farsetti and Loredan palaces, are stamped with a character distinctively Venetian. Gothic did not arrive at Venice—or was not accepted there—until some 60 years after Giovanni Pisano had designed the cloisters of the Pisan Campo Santo in 1270. At first there were churches erected—perhaps by Northern architects—in the Northern style pure and simple. Of this style the Frari church and ‘Zanipolo’ (SS. Giovanni e Paolo) are specimens. They are fine edifices; but this exotic ecclesiastical ‘escape’ did not become naturalized.

As usual Venice made use of the new style to evolve something distinctive. The pointed arch, with all its possibilities, having at last won its way to recognition (we shall see by what interesting stages), the new Venetian-Gothic palace architecture rapidly asserted itself in the place of Byzantine and Romanesque. There was, Mr. Ruskin tells us, no transitional form between the cessation of the Venetian Byzantine (c. 1300) and the imported, full-blown Gothic of the Frari church (c. 1320), from which about 20 years later was evolved in its perfection that tracery of the Doges’ Palace which is the distinctive characteristic of the fully developed and permanent Venetian Gothic—such as we see in the Cà d’oro and many other beautiful palaces of the Quattrocento.

But although there are in Venetian architecture no general transitional forms leading up to the new style, it is possible, and very interesting, to trace the gradual, shy, tentative, adoption of the pointed arch. At first, it would seem, its

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

great architectural possibilities were not recognized by Venetian builders. It was apparently regarded merely as piquantly decorative, and it was felt necessary to introduce the new fashion. So, as a concession to the insistence of Gothic innovators, a kind of pointed wedge appeared, forcing its way upwards and breaking through the old semicircle of the round arch.<sup>1</sup> But it was found that the arch thus formed (as had



DEVELOPMENT OF THE VENETIAN POINTED ARCH

doubtless been long ago discovered in the case of various very picturesque Saracen-like arches of similar form in St. Mark's) was constructively useless, the broken arc having no bearing-power. It was therefore decided 'to keep the poor old round arch underneath in order to do all the hard work while the fantastic ogee took its pleasure above in the form of a recurved decorative moulding.' This device (see illustration) is found in the old mansion of Marino Faliero (*Casa Falier*) and elsewhere.

But fashion proved too strong, and the point at the top of the round arch again appeared, bearing-power being secured for the broken arc to some extent by using a solid head-stone (fig. 2 in the illustration) with a recurved pointed incision cut into its lower concave. Then as this recurved arch was still constructively weak the recurve was abandoned for the arch shown in fig. 3. But this decidedly picturesque form, with spatula-shaped head, was weakened by the break in its descending curves. This double-curved form was therefore converted

<sup>1</sup> I am borrowing here from Mr. Ruskin. Also my rough outlines are founded on certain sketches in *Stones of Venice*.

## ART (1300-1400)

into that of the remaining three figures, the cusps being retained to strengthen the construction at the sides, as they do in English Gothic.

Now in the very first year of the Trecento (we are told by the celebrated architect Sansovino) the great *Sala del Maggior Consiglio* in the Doges' Palace was begun, and in 1309 the first sitting of the Grand Council took place in it. This Sala, which was enlarged to its present vast dimensions about 1340, needed special supports, and it was for this purpose that the arcades, with their strong columns, were constructed (those on the south side dating from about 1309, and those on the side of the Piazzetta being of about 1340). The architect of these arcades wishing to ornament the spaces above and between the arches (spaces that in Byzantine architecture were often decorated with marble carvings let into the wall) had the happy inspiration to adopt a beautiful design that he found in the windows of the Gothic Frari church—an excised quatrefoil set in a circle. This tracery (*traforo*, 'perforation'), combined with the newly evolved pointed arch, formed the main characteristic of that 15th-century Venetian Gothic with which we are all familiar, and of which so many beautiful examples exist.





## PART II

### IL QUATTROCENTO

#### HISTORICAL OUTLINE

**D**URING the Quattrocento the principal nations of Europe assumed definite, if not final, forms, but Italy still remained a political chaos; and to follow the mazy dance of its multitudinous atoms is especially difficult in the case of this century, during which their 'love and hate'—to use the metaphor of Empedocles—seem to have become more intense, and their attractions, repulsions, combinations, and divulsions more varied and incessant than ever.<sup>1</sup>

In this chapter I shall attempt to weave together the more important events, passing from one city or state to another somewhat abruptly, but, I hope, without breaking threads.

First let us glance at the general state of things at the beginning of the century. In Rome all is stagnation, lethargy, desolation. The Great Schism (1378-1417) has become seemingly irremediable. Neapolitan Boniface IX is Roman Pope, his Spanish rival, with the (afterwards disallowed) title of Benedict XIII, is Pope at Avignon, and is widely recognized. At Naples the Hungarian-Angevin Ladislaus is reigning<sup>2</sup>—

<sup>1</sup> *War, Father of all*, is another Greek saying—one that 'upon the outstretched finger of old Time sparkles for ever.' Differentiation is doubtless a sign of vitality, but surely only of lower vitality—that of the Many; and the fact that amidst serious national disintegration and bloody feuds Greece and Italy produced great works of art and literature in such profusion may well make us ask what affinity such things can have to that sphere in which diversity and discord melt into the 'white radiance of eternity.'

<sup>2</sup> Two branches of the Anjou family were claimants for the Neapolitan crown after the death of Joanna I, the last direct descendant of Charles of Anjou—namely, the Hungarian branch, derived from Charles Martel (Dante's friend), and the Angevins who had remained hitherto in France.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

son of that Charles of Durazzo who captured and strangled his cousin, Joanna I of evil repute—that Joanna who patronized Boccaccio.<sup>1</sup> At Milan the Visconti are still in power, and the ambitious Gian Galeazzo has lately received the ducal title from the 'Emperor' Wenzel (Wenceslaus). At Florence, ever since the Ciompi riot of 1378, there has been great commercial prosperity under the nominally republican government of wealthy burghers (among whom the Medici are gaining influence), and the Florentine territories are being extended by successful war and diplomacy. Venice, too, is prosperous. Indeed, unlike Florence, she is already near the zenith of her political and commercial power, the long decline of which from the latter part of the Quattrocento will be made splendid by the glories of her art and by her heroic struggle for supremacy against the Turks.

### 1400-1450

Now let us try to trace some of the main developments from this state of things during the first half of the century, and note, as far as possible, their interaction. And let us take the cities in the same order as before, beginning with **Rome and the Papacy**.

During the period that we have to consider, namely the first half of the Quattrocento, Rome is very slightly connected with the political movements of other Italian cities, and what is of interest in its internal history will be told in a later chapter ; so here we may limit ourselves to certain momentous events connected with the Papacy.

The Great Schism began in 1378, on the death of Gregory XI, who had transferred the papal seat from Avignon to Rome and died a year later. The pitiable condition of Rome during the pontificate of his successor, the excitable and brutal Neapolitan, Urban VI (whose rival at Avignon, the ferocious Cardinal Robert of Geneva, called himself 'Pope Clement VII'),

<sup>1</sup> Note that early in this century (1409) the crown of Sicily reverted to Aragon (Spain) by the marriage of the young Sicilian queen to the Aragonese prince-royal. Thus towards the middle of the century it came about that Alfonso V, as we shall see, drove out the Angevins and established the Aragonese dynasty of Naples, where he assumed the title 'Alfonso I.'

## HISTORICAL OUTLINE (1400-1500)

has been described in an earlier chapter, as well as the almost more deplorable state of things under the domination of the avaricious Boniface IX, whose boundless zeal for accumulating wealth by Jubilees and Indulgences and whose unblushing nepotism prepare one's mind for the age of the Borgias.

This conflict between the Popes of Rome and their rivals of Avignon, each supported by a large section of the Catholic world, was not of the same nature as that which had often been waged between some Pontiff and an Antipope set up, perhaps, by a Germanic 'Holy Roman Emperor.' It involved also no doctrinal controversy. The only question was that of legitimate election. But this very fact made the Schism seemingly incurable, for both rivals were championed by great numbers of the staunchly orthodox, and, as spiritual artillery was thus rendered useless, they had recourse to ordinary warfare of the most ferocious character; and 'in order to gain adherents,' says a modern Italian writer<sup>1</sup> of papal proclivities, 'titles, benefices, and indulgences were lavished on all sides by both the Popes.'

The first serious effort to stop this scandal was made by the doctors of the University of Paris, on whose suggestion an Oecumenical Council was held at Pisa in 1409. Both Popes (Gregory XII of Rome and 'Benedict XIII' of Avignon) were deposed, and another, Alexander V, was elected. But this only made matters worse, for the deposition was not recognized and there were therefore three Popes instead of two. Nor did Alexander's death in 1410 alter the situation, for another 'Pisan Pope,' John XXIII, was elected.<sup>2</sup> Then (1414-1417) at the celebrated Council of Constance, summoned by the 'Emperor' Sigismund, and attended by theologians from all parts of Christendom, Gregory voluntarily resigns, Benedict and John<sup>3</sup> are deposed, and a new Pope—Martin V, a Colonna

<sup>1</sup> Bragagnolo, *Storia del Medio Evo*. As the titles of the Schismatic Avignon Popes were later disallowed, I place them in inverted commas. The later, legitimate, Clement VII was Giulio de' Medici.

<sup>2</sup> The 'Pisan Popes' were recognized by France and England and Venice.

<sup>3</sup> Benedict proved recalcitrant and died unrepentant and excommunicated in 1424. John XXIII, 'Quondam Papa,' as he is called on his tomb in the

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

noble—is accepted as the sole Pontiff and crowned in the town of Constanz. Thus the Schism was healed and sweet savours of thank-offering rose to heaven from the pyres of the heretical reformers, John Huss and Jerome of Prag.

The new Pope, Martin V, a man of literary and artistic tastes, tried to ameliorate the condition of Rome, rebuilding ruins and introducing civic reforms; but he did nothing to reform the scandalous depravity of the clergy or the growing abuse of indulgences. The pontificate of his successor, Eugenius IV (1431–1447), is notable for the descent of the German Sigismund, who assumed the Iron Crown at Milan and, after a year's delay at Siena, where he was practically besieged by the Florentines, made his way to Rome and received the Imperial diadem.<sup>1</sup> It is still more notable for the Council of Basel and that of Florence. The former had been summoned by Martin, and Eugenius accepted the presidency; but when he perceived that the votes were tending towards the subordination of Popes to Oecumenical Councils he ordered its dissolution. Then, as a considerable section, composed mainly of German prelates, refused to be dissolved he removed the Council—such of it as was not recalcitrant—to Ferrara, whence, for fear of the plague, it migrated (1439) to Florence; and here it was attended by the Eastern Emperor, John Palaeologus VII, who for fear of the Turks was trying to win Italian allies by abjuring certain heresies; and with the Emperor came the Patriarch of Constantinople—whose portrait, as well as that of John Palaeologus, we have in Benozzo Gozzoli's famous fresco, and whose tomb may be seen in Sta Maria Novella.<sup>2</sup>

Baptistry, spent the rest of his life at Florence. While looking at Donatello's fine statue of the peacefully slumbering ex-Pope—Baldassare Cossa, as he was again called after his deposition—and while remembering that the tomb was erected by Cosimo, who had great regard for the fallen Pontiff, one is inclined to forget much that chroniclers relate of him. We know that he was for years a *condottiere* and fought against Ladislaus of Naples and Pope Gregory XII. His biographer, Niem, states that in early life he had been a pirate, and that in the first year of his pontificate *ducentas maritatas, viduas, et virgines, ac etiam quamplures moniales corruperat*.

<sup>1</sup> Twenty years later (1452) the last coronation of a Germanic 'Emperor' at Rome took place—that of Frederick III.

<sup>2</sup> For further details see the chapter on Florence.



## HISTORICAL OUTLINE (1400-1500)

The recalcitrant Germanic remainder of the Council at Basel now took an audacious and somewhat impressive step. It elected, as Antipope, Amedeo VIII of Savoy, who had lately resigned his dukedom to his son and was living as a recluse with a band of fanatics at Répaille, on the shore of Lake Lemman. Eugenius was in difficulties. He had effected nothing by his Florentine Council, and the hostility of Filippo Maria Visconti prevented his return to Rome. He spent about eight years in Florence, during which period (in 1442) he crowned as King of Naples the fugitive René of Anjou, lately ejected from Naples by Alfonso of Aragon. Finally, however, through the able diplomacy of his secretary, the Sienese Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (afterwards Pope Pius II), he gained the alliance of Alfonso, the Aragonese-Neapolitan king, and also that of Frederick III of Germany, to whom he offered the Imperial crown. Thereupon Antipope Amedeo (who had called himself Felix V) resigned his tiara and retired to his castle-hermitage on the Genevan lake; and shortly afterwards the remainder of the Basel Council dissolved itself.

Nicholas V, the next Pope (1447-1455), distinguished himself, as we shall see later,<sup>1</sup> by his zealous patronage of scholarship, literature, and art during this period—a period that we may call the early morning of the Renaissance. Moreover, he took an important part in matters affecting the weal of Italy. His coronation of Frederick III—the last coronation of any German ‘Holy Roman Emperor’ in Rome—and his hanging of the would-be successor of Cola di Rienzo, Stefano Porcari (of whom more hereafter), were perhaps not particularly beneficial to that weal; but it was a wise and skilful act to induce Francesco Sforza of Milan, Alfonso of Naples, and the Republics of Venice and Florence to sign the Peace of Lodi and to form (in 1455) a defensive and offensive league—the need of something like national unity having been painfully emphasized by the capture of Constantinople by the Turks (May 29, 1453).

<sup>1</sup> For his passion for ancient manuscripts, his gigantic building plans, his Vatican Library, and his employment of scholars and artists (*e.g.* Poggio, Valla, Alberti, Fra Angelico), see p. 369 and Chapters I and VII of this Part.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

—grief at which disaster is said to have finally killed the old Pontiff.

The internal history of **Naples** during the Quattrocento will be treated in a later chapter. Here we need note only a few events which influenced other parts of Italy. As we have seen, Ladislaus, the son of Charles of Durazzo, was Neapolitan king at the beginning of the century. Having lately outgrown the regency of his mother and having been crowned by the papal legate, he displayed unexpected energy, and with the aid of various *condottieri* he at one time seemed not unlikely to found a powerful kingdom (such as also the Visconti were trying to acquire), for he not only drove his rival, the French prince, Louis of Anjou, who called himself Louis II of Naples, out of Italy, but made himself master of Rome, the duchy of Spoleto, and the march of Ancona, and prepared to attack Florence and Bologna. The Florentines, however, foiled his ambitious designs, for they hired the famous *condottieri* Bal-dassare Cossa (later Pope John XXIII), Braccio, and Attendolo Sforza, and drove the King from Rome, and inflicted on him a serious defeat at Roccasecca, near the river Garigliano (Liris). But he repaired his fortunes, and took Rome for the second time, and having induced Sforza to come over to his side was preparing once more to assault Florence when (1414) he suddenly died, aged only 36.

The reign of his sister, Joanna II (1414-1435), and the various alternations of the conflict between the Angevins—Neapolitan and French—and Alfonso of Aragon (whom Joanna adopted and then renounced) are interesting mainly from the Neapolitan point of view. Here we need only state that in 1442 Alfonso captured Naples, driving thence *le bon roi*, René of Anjou (the father-in-law of our English Henry VI), and established the dynasty of the Aragonese Neapolitan monarchs.<sup>1</sup>

Now let us turn to **Milan**. A momentous event soon after the beginning of the Quattrocento was the sudden death of Gian

<sup>1</sup> That René, on his flight northwards, was crowned as King of Naples by Pope Eugenius at Florence, must have amused the victors. He and his son kept up the war, as Pretenders, for the next 22 years.

## HISTORICAL OUTLINE (1400-1500)

Galeazzo Visconti, who, as has been related, was carried off, perhaps by the plague, just as he was hoping to master Florence and to realize his dream of founding a great kingdom in Northern and Central Italy. His children, Giovanni Maria and Filippo Maria, succeeded to his dominions under the regency of their mother, Caterina, daughter of Bernabò—that uncle of his whom he murdered. Giovanni became Duke of Milan; Filippo Count of Pavia; and to an illegitimate son, Gabriele, was given Pisa. The dowager Caterina proved incompetent and was imprisoned by her military counsellors, among whom Facino Cane was especially powerful. This *condottiere* lorded it over the two young princes, making himself tyrant of Alexandria, Piacenza, and other places. They also lost Romagna, reconquered for the Pope by another soldier of fortune, Alberigo da Barbiano.<sup>1</sup> Verona too passed from the power of Milan to that of the Carrara, and then to that of Venice, which also (1405) acquired Padua, Vicenza, and other cities. Also Siena, liberated from Milanese supremacy, put herself under the protection of Florence, and Pisa was sold (1406) to Florence by Gabriele Visconti. Thus the great duchy of Gian Galeazzo fell to pieces rapidly.

Meanwhile his successor, the youthful Duke Giovanni, is winning for himself a name of horror for atrocities more than Viscontean. He seems to have taken special delight (like Bernabò) in seeing persons torn to pieces by his savage dogs, the bloodthirsty ferocity of which brutes he is said to have excited by feeding them on human flesh.<sup>2</sup> The hatred that he acquired was such that in 1412 he was assassinated by Milanese nobles in the chapel of the ducal palace, S. Gottardo. His brother Filippo then married the widow of the *condottiere* Facino Cane, who had lately died. This he did in order to win and strengthen his position as Milanese duke; but, being as cruel as he was crafty, he no sooner felt himself secure

<sup>1</sup> He is said to have taken into his service the young Attendolo, whom he nicknamed 'Sforza' on account of his vigorous character. See subsequent chapter on Milan.

<sup>2</sup> Compare p. 84.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

than he had the poor woman accused, tortured, and put to death. The cunning and ambition of this monster (who is said to have scarcely ever shown his loathly face in public) were rewarded by success in war, and with the aid of the *condottiere* Carmagnola he reconquered various revolted cities and made himself master of Genoa. Soon, however, his jealous and treacherous nature made him dismiss this skilful general, who entered Venetian service and at first inflicted serious defeats on his former employer; but being bribed, or for some unknown reason, Carmagnola so excited the suspicion of his new masters, the Venetians, that (in 1432) they put him to death—as will be fully narrated in the chapter on Venice. On the death of Filippo Maria in 1447, there being no male heir to the dukedom, the Milanese proclaimed what they called the ‘Golden Ambrosian Republic.’ This lasted for three years. Then Francesco Sforza,<sup>1</sup> the enterprising and intrepid *condottiere*, to whom Filippo Maria had given his illegitimate daughter Bianca, made himself master of the city and was proclaimed Duke (1450).

**Florence** is the next city on our list. Its internal history during this century will later occupy much of our space. Here we have only to note a few political events, some of which seem to have had a connexion, more or less direct, with political movements in other parts of Italy during the period that we are considering (1400–1450).

The sudden death, in 1402, of the ambitious and weirdly successful Gian Galeazzo of Milan, just as he was preparing what would have probably proved an irresistible assault on Florence, saved Northern and Central Italy from Milanese domination and the Florentine Republic from annihilation.

<sup>1</sup> Son of that Attendolo, nicknamed Sforza, who has been already mentioned and who was drowned when in the service of Joanna II of Naples. Francesco Sforza had fought for Venice (c. 1436 to 1442) against Filippo Maria and his new *condottiere*, Piccinino; but the crafty Visconti had bought him by means of his daughter and made him his heir. He soon quarrelled with him, and proclaimed Alfonso of Naples his successor. This he had no right to do, as the dukedom was hereditary and even his illegitimate daughter's husband, Sforza, had some legal claim.



## HISTORICAL OUTLINE (1400-1500)

Florence, although later she subjected herself to what many have called a tyranny, and what certainly we may call a despotism—comparable with that of Pericles if not of Peisistratus<sup>1</sup>—had hitherto tenaciously retained much of the outward form of a Commune; and it is a difficult and delicate task to trace accurately and to estimate justly the growth and the nature of the influences to which her republican liberties finally succumbed. As we have seen in former chapters, the outcome of the democratic Ciompi revolution of 1378 was that the 'fat burghers,' reflecting, as Machiavelli says, 'how great a disgrace it would be if they, who had tamed the pride of the *grandi*, should have to put up with the stench of the *plebe*,' ingratiated themselves with the nobles and, having banished Michele Lando and other democratic leaders, set up a plutocratic government. Under this government Florence prospered, and when liberated from the peril of Milanese domination it began to extend its territories. Pisa was acquired in 1406; Ladislaus of Naples was conquered in 1411; Livorno was annexed some years later. The political chiefs were at this time the Albizzi. Their great rivals ever since the days of the Ciompi riot had been the Medici, more than one of whom had held high office. In 1421 we find another of these Medici elected Gonfaloniere. This was Giovanni, son of Averardo (or 'Bicci') de' Medici, who, as some readers may remember, had been, in 1403, one of the judges who voted for Ghiberti's first Baptistery door—and thus helped to bring about Brunelleschi's withdrawal to Rome and all its momentous consequences.<sup>2</sup> A son of Giovanni di Bicci was the founder of the Medicean dynasty, namely Cosimo, who is distinguished from the later (Duke) Cosimo by the epithet *Vecchio* and by the title *Pater Patriae*.<sup>3</sup> Having by his wealth and liberality acquired what was considered by his political

<sup>1</sup> I speak here only of the Quattrocento. The rule of the later Medici was unqualified tyranny.

<sup>2</sup> The portrait of the simply dressed old fellow in the Uffizi Gallery offers a striking contrast to those of the later Medici.

<sup>3</sup> First given him after his death. His tomb is in S. Lorenzo. In the same vault lies Donatello. For Cosimo's portrait see Fig. 27 (b).

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

rivals a dangerous influence, he was exiled (1433) and withdrew to Venice. But the people soon insisted on his recall. Then for 30 years he remained, practically if not formally, the supreme magistrate of the state. During these 30 years Florence was involved for a considerable time in war with Milan. It suffered defeat by the soldiery of Filippo Maria, and after long persuasion Venice was induced (mainly through the renegade Carmagnola) to join in alliance against Milan (1425). Desultory war went on till the death of the Visconti in 1447. Then Cosimo supported Francesco Sforza in his claim to the dukedom of Milan; and soon afterwards he joined in the general alliance of Lodi which, as we have seen, was suggested by Pope Nicholas V as a bulwark against the Turkish peril (1454) and resulted in a period of peace in Italy. Cosimo's patronage of art will be described in a later chapter, as also much that, besides the Council of 1439, is of interest in the internal history of Florence during this first half of the Quattrocento.

As regards **Venice**—its story has been narrated in Part I up to the conquest of Padua and the tragic end of the Carrara (1405–1406), and in a subsequent chapter I shall give a good deal about its later internal history during the Quattrocento and shall relate two or three interesting episodes. Here certain events are to be noted which during the first half of the century connected its history with that of other Italian states.

It will be remembered how Venice, which for about six centuries had kept for the most part aloof from Italian influences, began in the Trecento, after wresting maritime supremacy from Genoa, to develop a 'mainland policy' and to acquire mainland territory. The Venetian occupation of Verona (from which city Gian Galeazzo had already expelled the last of the Scaligeri) and the capture of Padua had now 'committed Venice irretrievably to a policy of extension,' as the phrase goes, and brought her into direct and hostile contact with Milan. Moreover, extension in a northerly direction, towards Vicenza, Treviso, Feltre, and the Friuli, had brought

## HISTORICAL OUTLINE (1400-1500)

her into conflict with the German monarch,<sup>1</sup> Sigismund, with whom a long desultory warfare ensued.

The first Doge of this period (1400-1413) was Michele Steno, whose arrogant conduct, when he was a young man, had brought about the tragic end of Marino Faliero. He was succeeded by Tommaso Mocenigo, 'the last Doge of the old order.'<sup>2</sup> His reign is notable for a great naval victory over the Turks (at Gallipoli), the conquest of Dalmatia, and a successful campaign against 'Emperor' Sigismund's forces in Friuli, by which Venice was enabled to extend her territories up to the Julian Alps, annexing Udine and Gorizia, and securing something like that 'scientific frontier' for which Italy has lately been fighting. All this sharpens the land-hunger of the Venetians. But age and political experience warn Mocenigo against a quarrel with Milan, and he dies denouncing the war-party led by Francesco Foscari.<sup>3</sup> This youthful and fiery opponent of Mocenigo was chosen to succeed him; but so strong was the peace-party that in spite of Filippo Maria Visconti's provocative conquests in Tuscany and Romagna, and though Sigismund was safely occupied with 'Hussite' wars (caused by the burning of John Huss at Constanza), Venice remained quiescent for nearly ten years. Then, persuaded by the renegade Carmagnola (as has been related), the Venetians unwisely engaged, together with Florence, in a tedious war against the Milanese despot, which, after the dramatic end of Carmagnola, was carried on by the *condottieri* Francesco Sforza and Gattamelata,<sup>4</sup> and did not end until the death of the Visconti, an event which was

<sup>1</sup> Not crowned 'Holy Roman Emperor' till some twenty years later.

<sup>2</sup> So called by Mr. Horatio Brown in his book on Venice. In the coronation oath (*promissione*) of Mocenigo it was stipulated that the Doge should no longer be competent to summon the 'Concio' (*Arengo*, or Popular Assembly), which consequently soon became non-existent. The Doge henceforth is elected without popular sanction, and the old formula (already dead) 'Questo è vostro Doge, se vi piacerà,' is now entirely dropped.

<sup>3</sup> His vehement deathbed appeal to the assembled statesmen dwelt much on argument that reminds one of that not long ago attributed to hyphenated Americans, viz. that Venice made yearly by trade with Milan two million ducats, and if she could only keep out of war she would become the financial centre of the world.

<sup>4</sup> For his famous equestrian statue by Donatello see pp. 281 *n.* and 419.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

soon followed by the installation of the Sforza as Duke of Milan. When this took place Francesco Foscari had been Doge for 27 years. He had seen the dominion and commerce of Venice considerably extended; but there were dark clouds on the horizon. Soon Constantinople was to fall, and the Turkish power was to prove a very serious danger to Venice. Soon, too, was to be enacted the tragedy of the Two Foscari.

### 1450-1500

We have now to note in the history of these same five representative cities such events as were connected with the general political movements of Italy during the latter half of the Quattrocento.

First, glancing backward, we note that between 1400 and 1450 great changes had taken place in all these cities. Rome had succumbed to the re-established Papacy. Naples and Milan had changed their ruling dynasties. In Florence the Medici had arisen. Venice had become a mainland Power. These changes caused many wars, but by about the middle of the century equipoise was restored, and the balance of power was confirmed, as we shall see, by the general peace of Lodi. This state of equipoise, although constantly shaken, was not entirely upset until the advent of the French at the end of the century. Secondly, on glancing forward one must be struck at once by two facts which largely influenced the character of this half-century—the Turkish peril and the Early Renaissance.

The **Turks** first crossed over into Europe (near Gallipoli) in 1356. Suleiman and Amurat conquered much of Thrace, and Bajazet, the first 'Sultan,' inflicted at Nicopolis (1396) a terrible defeat on the Christians, of whom 10,000 were beheaded after the battle. Bajazet would have taken Constantinople had not a formidable rival arisen in the East—that Turkish Attila, Tamerlan, by whom he was conquered at Angora. But on the death of Tamerlan (1405) the son of Bajazet, Mohammed I, and Mohammed's son, Amurat II, re-established the Ottoman dynasty. Constantinople was again besieged, Albania and Serbia were conquered, and the Venetians lost





18. SULTAN MOHAMMED II



19. FREDERICK III AND ELEONORA OF PORTUGAL

## HISTORICAL OUTLINE (1400-1500)

Thessalonica (1430) and much of Dalmatia. Amurat then, badly beaten by the Hungarian general Hunyadi, made peace ; but it was violated by the Christians on papal instigation, and they suffered a bloody defeat at Varna (1444), where the Hungarian king, Ladislaus, was killed ; and four years later Hunyadi was overpowered at Kossovo in a battle that lasted three days. Then came (1453) the siege and capture of Constantinople by Mohammed II and the heroic death of the last ' Roman ' Eastern Emperor, Constantine Palaeologus.

The alarm caused by the fall of Constantinople was naturally very great. It led to the Peace of Lodi and a defensive League ; but France and England were at drawn daggers, Germany was afraid of what it deemed papal intrigues, and the jealousies of the Italian cities, which had ever stultified the word ' patriotism,' frustrated federation, and made national union a possibility only under some alien invader or native despot, rendered Italians deaf to the appeals of three Popes, Nicholas V, Calixtus III, and Pius II, who—apparently with unselfish motives—vainly attempted to set on foot crusades against the infidels. Only from Venice came any worthy response. Her greatness depended on her Eastern commerce and her Eastern possessions. She was therefore obliged to come forward as the champion of Western Christendom and to enter on a conflict which she had to sustain almost alone for more than two centuries. In 1470 she lost Euboea and other colonies. Some years later the Turks invaded the Friuli and came so near to Venice that the smoke of the burning towns could be seen from the Campanile of St. Mark's, and in 1480 (incited, perhaps, by the Venetians, who had made peace with them) they made a descent by sea on the coast of South Italy and captured Otranto, where they massacred the inhabitants. But the death of Mohammed II and a disputed succession paralysed for a time their power. In 1481 they were expelled from Otranto by Ferdinand I of Naples, and for the rest of the century Italy was comparatively free from their aggressions.

The subject of the **Renaissance** in its various aspects will be discussed later. Just for the sake of orientation I shall



## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

here indicate the main lines of its early development as regards literature and art.

(1) *Literature*. We have seen how the first splendid outburst of native Italian literature was accompanied (*e.g.* in the case of Petrarca) by a great enthusiasm for the ancient classical writers. By the middle of the Quattrocento the zeal for collecting ancient manuscripts reached a climax (note the libraries of Nicholas V, Cosimo de' Medici, etc.), and Latin once more banished the *volgare* from 'polite' literature; but side by side with dead classicism there still existed a vigorous native poetry, despised by the pedantic *eruditi*. Then towards the end of the Quattrocento comes a period of truer classical scholarship, attended, as was natural, by a revived admiration for the native literature—for Dante, Petrarca, and other great early Italian writers.<sup>1</sup> Thus was formed a gradual fusion of classical refinement with native vigour, and there arose a new genuine Italian literature, with which one connects the names of Poliziano, Lorenzo de' Medici, Pulci, and Boiardo, and, later, those of Ariosto, Machiavelli, Guicciardini, Castiglione, and Tasso.

(2) *Art*. If we are to append any date to the first manifestation of the new movement, we cannot do better than choose 1425—the year in which Ghiberti began his *second* Baptistery door. During the next 50 years we have the real *Quattrocentisti*—the painters of the Early Renaissance, such as Fra Angelico, Masaccio, and Filippo Lippi. Then come the Bellini, Botticelli, Perugino, and many others, and towards the end of the century we approach (through Leonardo da Vinci) the era of Michelangelo, Raphael, and Tiziano. In plastic art we have of especial note Donatello (*d.* 1466) and the three Della Robbia. The rise of Renaissance architecture was due mainly to Brunelleschi (*d.* 1446), whose works we shall consider fully in the chapter on Art.

Even the briefest preliminary notice of the Early Renais-

<sup>1</sup> Due greatly to the study of *Greek* authors introduced by fugitives from Constantinople. Alberti (1405–1472), who was also one of the first Renaissance architects, was the first important restorer of the *volgare*.



## HISTORICAL OUTLINE (1400-1500)

sance in Italy cannot fail to mention, both as causes and as effects of the new quest for knowledge and emancipation, the epoch-making inventions and discoveries first made, or first fully applied, in the 15th century—such as the invention of printing and the discovery of the New World. And facts that must strike every one on the most casual glance at the subject of Quattrocento art are the wondrous supremacy of Tuscany, especially of Florence, in the production of original genius, and the revival of Rome, towards the end of the century, as a great centre of art—a revival due primarily to the employment of Tuscan masters by the Popes, who after the end of the Schism began to amass enormous wealth, mostly by means of Jubilees, Indulgences, and other such devices. The chief architects of Nicholas V, of Paul II, and of Sixtus IV were probably Tuscan—Bern. Rossellini, Alberti, Caprino of Settignano, and others. As early as 1417 Masolino and Masaccio were in Rome, and the latter died there in 1428, as did Fra Angelico in 1455; Angelico's pupil, Benozzo Gozzoli, was with his master in Rome; Botticelli and Perugino and Ghirlandaio also worked there; and at the beginning of the next century, as all know, we find at Rome both Michelangelo and Raphael.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

Of our five representative cities **Rome** comes first; but Rome has now become, as it were, the private property of the **Papacy**. Even in the voluminous *History of the City of Rome* by Gregorovius one may search in vain for any signs of political independence in the Eternal City during the latter half of the 15th century. The only events that one finds affecting other Italian cities and states, and therefore of use in a general historical outline, are such as were due to the action of the Popes; and papal intrigues, alliances, and wars will be sufficiently indicated in a later chapter, where accounts given by chroniclers of the terrible state of Rome and of the papal court will be cited, and the various characters and activities of the Quattrocento Popes, among whom are the notorious Borgia Pontiffs, will be discussed. The names and dates of these Popes will be found in List 2.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

**Naples**, as we have seen, was captured in 1442 by Alfonso of Aragon.<sup>1</sup> He chased from Italy his French rival, René of Anjou, and founded the dynasty of Aragonese-Neapolitan kings, which lasted until Naples, about 1503, fell into the power of Ferdinand the Catholic and became subject, for more than two centuries, to the Spanish monarchs.

The reign and character of Alfonso I will be discussed in the chapter on Naples. He left Aragon, Sicily, and Sardinia to his brother John, and the Neapolitan Regno to his illegitimate son Ferdinand I (Ferrante), who, unrecognized by Calixtus but accepted by the wiser Pius II (Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini of Siena), reigned for 36 years.<sup>2</sup> He was odiously avaricious and cruel, but distinguished as a patron of art and learning, able as politician and successful in war, so that during his reign Naples became a leading Power in Italy. After his defeat of the Angevins at Troja in 1462 the French Pretenders finally renounced pressing their claims. Some 16 years later, in alliance with the Pope, Sixtus IV—whose Pazzi conspiracy had failed—he was so successful against Florence that Lorenzo de' Medici was impelled to make his adventurous journey to Naples in order to obtain peace (see the chapter on Florence, and Fig. 32). In 1481 Ferrante succeeded in ejecting the Turks from Otranto—a feat, or bit of luck, of national importance. In 1485–1487 the barons of the Regno, who ever since the days of the Hohenstaufen emperor, Frederick II, had proved a danger to the monarchy, being hideously treated, rose in rebellion. This rebellion was suppressed by Ferrante and his 'abominable' son, Alfonso, with a ferocity<sup>3</sup> that earned them the hatred of the Neapolitans, so that when Pope Innocent VIII, the crafty Cibo, who had fostered the rebellion, together with Lodovico Sforza of Milan,

<sup>1</sup> See his triumphal arch, Fig. 23, and List of Illustrations.

<sup>2</sup> Ferdinand I was the father of that Eleonora who married the Duke of Ferrara and became mother of Isabella and Beatrice of Este, of whom we shall hear later. See Table VIII.

<sup>3</sup> Gregorovius asserts that Ferrante, with his 'abominable son Alfonso,' attacked the barons merely in order to 'cleanse the Regno of the baronial leprosy,' and that the barons supplicated the aid of Pope Innocent.

## HISTORICAL OUTLINE (1400-1500)

invited the half-witted Charles VIII of France to make himself master of Naples, the two Aragonese princes found that they could not depend on the loyalty of their subjects. But Innocent (as also Lorenzo de' Medici) died in 1492. He was succeeded by the notorious Rodrigo Borgia (Alexander VI), and the Pope's welcome to Charles VIII was not warm; nor was that of the revived Florentine Republic. In spite of this the French king determined to attack Naples, and was preparing for his descent into Italy when suddenly Ferdinand died; and as soon as the French reached Rome his son, now King Alfonso II, conscious of the hatred with which he was regarded by his subjects, resigned the crown to his heir Ferdinand (Ferrantino) and escaped by sea to Sicily; and shortly afterwards the new king had to follow his father's example and sailed to Ischia.

The success of Charles VIII proved, however, transient, for the Moro (Lodovico Sforza) had repented and had joined a league against the invaders. The French king withdrew, and his troops left behind in Naples proved untrustworthy, so ere long Ferrantino (Ferdinand II) regained his capital and his realm. But he died (October 1496) a few days after his complete re-establishment. He was succeeded by his uncle, Frederic III (1496-1501), the last of the Aragonese dynasty of Naples, who was driven out by an infamous league of Louis XII of France with Ferdinand the Catholic, consort of Isabella of Castile and monarch of united Spain and Sicily. Finally, after a struggle between the two accomplices, Naples remained in the power of the Spaniards.

The long struggle between the French and the Spanish<sup>1</sup> in Italy, begun as early as the Sicilian Vespers (1282) and accentuated by this descent of Charles VIII, followed by that of Louis XII, was of course greatly affected by the famous battle of Pavia (1525), which secured a long supremacy of the Spanish-Austrians by the triumph of the Emperor Charles V and the capture of Francis I of France. But the conflict went

<sup>1</sup> First the Aragonese of Sicily, then Aragonese-Neapolitans, then the Spanish, then the Spanish-Austrians. See Tables II, III.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

on until the 18th century, and during the whole of the period that is yet to be treated in this volume we shall find the realm of Naples dominated by Spanish viceroys and forming no integral part of Italy proper.

The external political history of **Milan** under the Sforza (1450–1500) is what we have now to note. From about 1310 till 1447 its lords had been the Visconti, who reigned as *dukes* from 1395. In 1450, as has been related, Francesco Sforza overthrew the short-lived Ambrosian Republic, and during the second half of the century (which is our present period) the city and its territories were ruled by the Sforza dukes—the last of whom <sup>1</sup> was captured and deposed by the French king, Louis XII, in the year 1500.

The 'Golden Ambrosian Republic' had been bolstered up by the Venetians, and Francesco Sforza, who as a soldier of fortune had changed sides frequently and made many enemies, and was naturally regarded by King Alfonso as an upstart, found himself opposed by an alliance of Naples and Venice. But Cosimo de' Medici was his firm friend, and republican Florence, intensely jealous of Venice, meanly supported the new Milanese despot by encouraging the French Pretender, René of Anjou, in his conflict with the ally of the Venetians, King Alfonso. Milan, thus aided, was too powerful to dread open assault. The war dragged on languidly.<sup>2</sup> The feeble and self-indulgent René returned to France. Then, at the instigation of Nicholas V, the Peace of Lodi was signed and (1454) a general league made against the Turks, who had lately captured Constantinople. But this combination soon underwent one of those kaleidoscopic permutations which in Italian history so frequently occur, and we find Sforza championing the cause of Alfonso and Ferrante of Naples against the Angevins, and at the same time receiving permission from Louis XI of France to make himself lord of Genoa and Savona,

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* Lodovico. His two sons were allowed the ducal title by the Emperors Maximilian and Charles V, but they were mere puppets. After 1535 the dukedom was appropriated by Charles V. See Table V.

<sup>2</sup> It was now (1452) that the German Frederick III came to Italy for his two crowns; for which farce turn to p. 232.



## HISTORICAL OUTLINE (1400-1500)

and betrothing his son and heir to Bona of Savoy, the sister-in-law of the French king.

The adventurous experiences of this heir, Galeazzo Maria, on his succession to the ducal throne (1466), his marriage, the splendours of his visit to Lorenzo de' Medici at Florence, the magnificence and voluptuousness of his Milanese court in the newly completed Castello Sforzesco, his assassination at the portal of the ancient basilica of S. Stefano—all these things are described in the chapter where Milan's internal history during the Quattrocento is related. Here we have only to note that during Galeazzo Maria's reign of ten years his wars and alliances affected very slightly the balance of power in Italy. For the first five years a Triple Alliance between Milan, Florence, and Naples (Ferdinand I) carried on desultory hostilities against Venice, which city was making itself much hated by its arrogance.<sup>1</sup> The only fighting of interest was in connexion with the disputed lordship of Rimini, claimed by Pope Paul II with the help of Venice after the death of that strange and interesting character Sigismondo Malatesta—whose name reminds one equally of the ill-fated Francesca and that deified Isotta to whom her lover with the aid of Leon Battista Alberti raised the great 'Temple of the Malatesta'—the Duomo of Rimini.

A spell of peace now ensued, but troubles began once more as soon as Sixtus IV mounted the papal throne—that low-born Genoese friar who was ere long to make such dire mischief by instigating the Pazzi conspiracy at Florence. Through his intrigues yet another kaleidoscopic combination took place, so that when the young, weak-minded Gian Galeazzo succeeded his assassinated father (1476) Milan, Florence, and Venice were allied against Naples and the Papacy. But papal intrigues and excommunications did not permanently ruin the amity between Milan and Naples, as we shall see when we come to the marriage of the young Duke to Isabella, a granddaughter of Ferdinand I, and the marriage of the usurping Duke, Lodovico il Moro, to another of his granddaughters—Beatrice d'Este.

<sup>1</sup> For Venetian arrogance see p. 348.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

These events will be found described in the chapter in which some of the more interesting episodes of the internal history of Milan during this century are narrated. Among these episodes is the story of how the feeble-willed youth Gian Galeazzo was ousted from power, and perhaps poisoned, by his ambitious and masterful uncle, Lodovico il Moro; how Il Moro invited and welcomed the deformed and silly Charles VIII and then helped to eject him from Italy; how he was attacked by the next French king, Louis XII, and fled to Germany; how he returned, was overthrown and sent as prisoner to France—an event that closed the century, and with it the rule of the Sforza as independent Dukes of Milan.

About **Florence** there will be so much to be said later in connexion with Lorenzo the Magnificent, with Savonarola, and with the art and literature of the Quattrocento, that I need here only indicate the main outline of its political history during the second half of the century. In 1450 we left Cosimo practically, if not formally, vested with an authority almost absolute and *de facto* master of Florence but *de jure* only a private citizen—living, too, as such while spending much of his great riches in patronizing art, in beautifying the city,<sup>1</sup> in founding libraries and the famous Platonic Academy. His son Piero ‘the Gouty’ (1464–1469) continued his father’s policy of supporting strongly the Sforza dukes and the ‘Triple Alliance’ of Milan, Florence, and Naples against Venetian aggression and arrogance. His health prevented him from taking much part in public affairs, and his unfortunate act of calling in the great loans of the Medici made him unpopular. A dangerous conspiracy was formed, headed by Luca Pitti, whose vast palace, then in course of construction, served as a stronghold for discontent. Piero however showed unexpected energy in suppressing the movement and magnanimity in pardoning the ringleaders.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Also ‘Milan, Paris, and Jerusalem enjoyed the fruits of his munificence’ (Bragagnolo). In Jerusalem he built a hostel for pilgrims.

<sup>2</sup> The early Medici showed fine traits. They were true *patres patriae*. Their almost absolute power seems to have been based on the respect and affection of the people. Lorenzo first began to adopt contemptible methods

## HISTORICAL OUTLINE (1400-1500)

When Piero Gottoso died, his two sons, Lorenzo and Giuliano, were youths of 20 and 17 respectively. Lorenzo by means of an elective *balia* secured the same position as had been held by his father. His reign of 23 years will occupy our attention in a subsequent chapter. Here we need only note, as of what one might call national importance, the very serious state of things caused by the complicity of Pope Sixtus IV in the Pazzi conspiracy (in which Giuliano de' Medici was killed). Furious at the failure of his suborned assassins the Pontiff stirs up Ferdinand of Naples against Florence and lays all Tuscany under a ban—to which Florence responds by holding a Council in the Duomo and excommunicating Pope Sixtus. The Florentines, however, got the worst of the quarrel, and the situation was saved only by the adventurous and chivalric visit of Lorenzo, possibly on the suggestion of Ferrante, to Naples—a fact unforgettable by those who know Botticelli's beautiful picture of *Pallas and the Centaur* (Fig. 32). During the last ten years of his rule Florence enjoyed peace and prosperity, his authority being firmly upheld by a Council of Seventy entirely subject to his will.

Some years before Lorenzo's death Savonarola (whose story will be told later) had begun to exercise his wondrous influence, and when Lorenzo's son, Piero the Unfortunate, proved his cowardice and incompetence by submitting to the French invader, Charles VIII, and was consequently expelled from Florence, the republican government was re-established (1494), and the Frate for four years was a great power. Then came his tragic end—his enemy, the diabolical Borgia—Pope Alexander VI—having proved too crafty and too strong.

The new Republic lasted 18 years—until 1512, when, as we shall see in Part III, Piero's brothers, Cardinal Giovanni (later Pope Leo X) and Giuliano, Duke of Nemours, were in order to curry favour with the *plebe*. A method that he used was to have a *balia* (commission) constituted of members devoted to his interests. This self-renovating *balia* had full powers to elect and re-elect the supreme magistrate, and the 'Magnificus,' as the Medicean president was called, although nominally a mere burgher, was an uncrowned king.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

reinstated.<sup>1</sup> During this period of republican liberty Florentine art produced some of its grandest works. There were to be found then at Florence Botticelli, Fra Bartolomeo, Lorenzo di Credi, Albertinelli, Perugino, Filippino Lippi, Andrea della Robbia, Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci (who finished his *Cenacolo* at Milan in 1498), and Raphael—who came to Florence in 1504, where he studied the great cartoons of these last two masters and Fra Bartolomeo's works and Masaccio's frescos and began to develop his new style. In this year, too, was finished Michelangelo's colossal statue of David—that splendid symbol of the Republic awaiting the assault of its enemies with dauntless self-reliance.

We left the story of **Venice** at the point (1450) where Francesco Foscari had already reigned for 27 years. His zealous advocacy of mainland extension had resulted in long and ineffectual wars with the last of the Visconti, and when, on the death of the despot, Milan established the Ambrosian Republic, the Venetian Doge, after opposing it with Sforza's aid, turned against the faithless *condottiere*<sup>2</sup> and strongly supported it. Consequently, on the overthrow of the Milanese Republic Venice found herself attacked by the Sforza and his ally, Cosimo de' Medici. The League of Lodi (1454) for a time allayed these mainland conflicts, but this league was directed especially against the Turks, who had just captured Constantinople, and Venice had to bear, generally alone, the brunt of their formidable advance. She had to defend herself not only as Queen of the Adria, but as mother of many rich cities and provinces on Eastern shores. No wonder that Foscari was fiercely and obstinately opposed by the party adverse to his ambitious *terra ferma* policy, which exposed mainland Venetia to the attacks of rival Italian states and Dalmatia and the Friuli to the attacks of the infidels. We shall

<sup>1</sup> Piero himself, who had made vain and ridiculed efforts to re-enter Florence, and had led a life of hideous dissipation at Rome, was drowned (1503) in the river Garigliano when fighting for the French against the Spanish troops of Ferdinand the Catholic.

<sup>2</sup> To try to follow all the endless tergiversations of *condottieri* and all the endless combinations of belligerent towns and states is a Danaïd labour.



## HISTORICAL OUTLINE (1400-1500)

see later (Chapter V) how at last the old Doge, heart-broken by the charges of treason brought against his son, and by his death, is forced by his political opponents to abdicate, and dies (it is said) of grief.

Even before the death of Foscari Venice had been obliged to come to terms with the Turks; but the fervid appeal of Pius II for a crusade against the infidel,<sup>1</sup> though it met with no response from other quarters, was taken up by Venice, who thus found herself again alone facing her terrible foe. Ere long she lost Euboea and other territory, and, as we have already seen, the Ottomans even invaded the Friuli and threatened the Venetian city itself. So low did her fortunes and her fortitude sink that she tried, it is said, to defend her own interests by diverting the infidels against South Italy and inciting them to capture Otranto—which they did (1480). The Venetian losses were to some extent compensated by the acquisition of Cyprus—not by very creditable means, as we shall see when we come to the episode of Caterina Cornaro (1488).

The last six years of the century brought many woes on Italy and sowed the seeds of many future troubles. Venice did not distinguish herself honourably. At first she tried to incite the French king, Charles VIII, to assert his claim to Milan. Then she joined Lodovico of Milan in inviting this king to invade Naples, on a similar pretext. (It was at this time that took place the visits to Venice of the sisters Isabella d'Este of Mantua and Beatrice d'Este of Milan.) Then she joined in the league that resulted in the retreat of Charles VIII from Italy and the battle of Fornovo (see p. 300). Then, very meanly, bribed by a promise of a part of the Milanese territory as a reward for her treason, she supported the next French king, Louis XII, in his invasion of Italy, which resulted in the

<sup>1</sup> See Index. He is said to have died of grief at the failure of his plan—at Ancona, whither he had gone to place himself at the head of his Crusaders. But when he left Rome he was in almost a dying condition. The episode is pathetic. Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini was one of the most cultivated, if not most learned, of the Popes, and a man of generous impulses—in spite of the depreciation of the German Gregorovius.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

capture of Lodovico of Milan and Frederic of Naples, and the fall of these cities as independent Italian states.

The conduct of Venice at this crisis in Italian history is unpardonable. But it is explainable. She was doubtless actuated by the hope that the French might help her against the Turks as well as against foes nearer home. Her commercial prosperity and her maritime power were still very great, but the discovery of America (1492) and that of the Cape route to India (1498) were soon to undermine her trade, and the ceaseless advances of the Turks to dissolve her empire. Her proud aloofness, her receptivity for Oriental culture, her great overseas empire, her maritime hegemony, her aggressiveness, and her arrogance—all this excited jealousy and hatred, and conscious, doubtless, that she was now entering on a struggle for existence she felt ready to adopt any measures that might avert, or defer, the threatened catastrophe. How serious the outlook was may be inferred from the fact that shortly after the end of the century she found herself face to face not only with the Turkish peril, but with a league of three great European nations, together with the Papacy and several Italian states, all bound together by the vow *spegnere, come incendio comune, l'insaziabile cupidigia dei Veneziani e la loro sete d'ingiusta dominazione*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The words of the manifesto of the German Emperor Maximilian. He demanded, among other trifles, the 'restoration to the Empire' of Padua, Verona, Vicenza, Trieste, Rovereto, etc. etc. History repeats itself; but its repetition has lately been followed by the total and, let us hope, final collapse of Germanic Empires, Holy and other.

## CHAPTER I

### ROME AND THE PAPACY (1400-1500)

FOLLOWING the plan hitherto adopted I shall in these chapters sketch a few episodes and personalities without any anxious regard to continuity and perspective, seeing that the reader can focus everything with tolerable accuracy by means of the Historical Outline and the Lists and Tables.

About 1400 we find Italian states beginning to take some sort of shape. The Germanic 'Holy Roman Empire' has long ago, as regards Italy, practically ceased to exist; the attempt of Cola di Rienzo to form an Italian Republic and the ignobler endeavours of Angevins and Visconti to unite Italy under *un solo re* have failed; but the towns and territories subject to more powerful republics and signories, such as Florence, Venice, and Milan, are now combining into organized political bodies round their respective centres. At Rome too, despite the Schism, Pope Boniface has lately acquired the *dominium* of the city, where he is fortifying himself strongly in S. Angelo and laying the foundation of the Papal States.

It is true that this foundation was by no means as yet solidly laid. Indeed during the first half of the century it suffered frequent subsidence. Between 1408 and 1414 the ambitious and impetuous Ladislaus of Naples made himself master, and called himself King, of Rome, forcing Pope Gregory XII to flee to Siena and Lucca. Gregory's successors too, the 'Pisan' Popes Alexander V and John XXIII, were mostly exiles or absentees, and even when the Schism was ended by the election at Constanx of the almost universally

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

recognized Colonna Pope, Martin V, it was three years before he could enter Rome and set to work at the restoration of the papal *dominium* as well as that of the pitiably ruined churches and palaces of the ill-fated city. And, once more, Martin's successor, Eugenius IV, threatened by the Visconti and by a republican rising, fled on a pirate's galley (1434) and lived for some 8½ years at Florence, Bologna, and Ferrara, as an exile, much worried by the existence of an Antipope,<sup>1</sup> until by the aid of Alfonso of Aragon, who had lately (1442) made himself master of Naples, and by the influence of Frederick III, Germanic 'King of the Romans,' with whom he made a *Concordat*, promising him Imperial coronation, he was enabled to re-establish himself in Rome. But these checks to its early development only deferred for a time the sovereignty of the Popes over the city; and on this urban *dominium* was built up rapidly by the later Quattrocento Pontiffs (especially by the infamous Alexander VI through the instrumentality of his son Caesar Borgia) the larger *dominium* of the Papal States—an edifice of much more solid and permanent nature than that loosely compacted domain over which in earlier days the Popes had claimed sovran authority on the strength of fictitious Donations,<sup>2</sup> and Countess Matilda's Legacy, and the conquests of Albornoz. We may perhaps regard the return of Eugenius in 1443 as the definite beginning of the new era—that long and notable period, as notable for its horrors as for its magnificence—in which the Popes were to be absolute masters of Rome and to wield a very real authority in Italy and elsewhere as temporal sovereigns. The sense of liberty being almost totally<sup>3</sup> extinguished by assaults from without and by papal domination within, there is not much to interest us in the internal history of Rome during the Quattrocento except what concerns art and learning and the personalities of the Pontiffs.

<sup>1</sup> The ex-Duke Amadeo VIII of Savoy, 'Felix V.' See Index.

<sup>2</sup> Curiously enough it was just now, when the Papacy was developing into a temporal power, that the scholar Valla utterly demolished the fiction of Constantine's Donation—by which he earned the mortal enmity of Eugenius IV and the Inquisition.

<sup>3</sup> The last flicker was Porcari's ill-fated conspiracy. See pp. 231, 233.



## ROME (1400-1500)

These were fourteen in number, including the two 'Pisan Popes' and excluding that obstinate old Schismatic, 'Benedict XIII' and the Antipope 'Felix V.' Several of them had very little to do with Rome on account of the Schism, and as the complexities of this miserable squabble have been sufficiently unravelled in the Historical Outline we need not trouble ourselves any more about these Pontiffs and their Councils at Pisa, Constanza, Basel, Ferrara, and Florence, except so far as that held at Florence and presided over by the fugitive Eugenius is connected with points of interest that will later occupy our attention. Of the remaining Popes two or three are of minor importance, so I shall limit myself mainly to the three famous Pontiffs Nicholas V (1447-55), Sixtus IV (1471-84), and Alexander VI (1492-1503), giving also a few facts about three others.

### NICHOLAS V

In the same year (1447) died the last of the Visconti dukes, Filippo Maria, and Pope Eugenius IV. By the favour of the Aragonese conquerors of Naples and the German 'King of the Romans' this Pope had lately returned to Rome after his long exile at Florence. He had found the city reduced by the wars with Ladislaus and by internal anarchy to the most deplorable state, 'changed,' says his biographer,<sup>1</sup> 'into a village of cowherds, with pigs and cattle wandering through the streets'; and worse sights were daily to be seen, such as 'heads and limbs of human bodies nailed up at the city gates, or dangling on gibbets, or impaled on stakes, and lines of prisoners being haled to prison and to torture.' Eugenius set to work energetically. He repaired St. Peter's basilica and the Vatican and Lateran palaces, cleared, widened, and paved streets, demolished the shops and shanties under the Pantheon portico, converted the Campo di Fiore, then an open meadow, into a great piazza, and encouraged the building of many fine palaces. His architectural zeal was evidently fired during his residence in Florence, where Brunelleschi had just finished the

<sup>1</sup> *Vita di Eugenio*, by Vespasiano, quoted by Muratori and Gregorovius.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

cathedral dome,<sup>1</sup> and it was equalled by his enthusiasm for painting and for the new learning—evidences of which were his invitation of Fra Angelico to Rome and his re-establishment of the Roman University (the 'Sapienza'). But these laudable efforts were cut short by death, and it was reserved for his successor to be the first of those Pontiffs whose regal munificence endowed Rome with such countless art treasures and superb edifices.

Nicholas V, son of a Sarzana surgeon, Parentucelli by name, had been, while a poor priest, tutor in rich Florentine families. Wondrous things were reported of his learning and extraordinary memory—his ability to recite by heart the complete works of poets, historians, and philosophers. He travelled much, probably as tutor, and is said to have visited England. At Florence (c. 1443) he was engaged to arrange the famous library that Cosimo de' Medici was collecting in the convent of S. Marco—the germ of the present Laurentian Library; and he must have become intimate with many of the literary and artistic Florentine celebrities, such as Alberti, Michelozzo, Brunelleschi, Ghiberti, Donatello, and Fra Angelico. He gained the favour of Pope Eugenius IV, who was then living in Florence, and by him was made Archbishop of Bologna; and the oration that he held at the funeral of this Pope is said to have made such impression on the cardinals by its marvellous erudition and eloquence that to the general astonishment of Christendom he was elected to the papal throne. Nicholas was a man of simple, scholarly, and artistic tastes, and no lover of idle pomps and vanities; but he arrived at a moment when all tended strongly towards the attainment by the Papacy of that worldly sovereignty which ever since the days of Constantine and Silvester had been the one supreme object of almost every so-called Vicar of Christ. There were no longer any Schismatics to question his title. The last of the Antipopes

<sup>1</sup> The Florentine Duomo was consecrated by Eugenius in 1436. Brunelleschi had already built S. Lorenzo, and was building or designing S. Spirito and the Pitti Palace, and Michelozzo was building the Medici (Riccardi) palace. During this period, Cosimo, *Pater Patriae*, was supreme at Florence.

## ROME (1400-1500)

—the hermit ex-Duke Amadeo—had laid aside the tiara and returned to the shores of Lake Leman. The troublesome question of the moral reform of the clergy had been temporarily silenced by the fierce debates of Council after Council on subjects considered far more important. There was as yet but little sign of the approaching tempest of the great Apostasy. In Rome itself a faint and futile flicker of the old spirit of liberty was quickly, and to all appearance effectually, extinguished.

This vain protest had been raised by Stefano Porcari, a Roman of high rank and of remarkable learning, who, like Cola di Rienzo,<sup>1</sup> was fired by an enthusiasm for antiquity and by the longing to revive the Republic and to cast off papal domination. On the death of Pope Eugenius he had addressed a speech to the citizens assembled on the Capitol, in the church of Aracoeli and had indignantly denounced the base enslavement and cowardly submission of the priest-ridden descendants of the heroic Scipios. Nicholas tried to win over by leniency the man and his handful of adherents, and prudently removed him from Rome, making him Podestà of Anagni. For a time trouble was averted, and Nicholas began to consolidate his position by conciliatory diplomacy<sup>2</sup> and by adding to the defences of the Vatican, the Castle of S. Angelo, and other papal strongholds. He also held a Jubilee (1450) which proved an enormous success, bringing immense sums into his coffers and enabling him to gratify his not ignoble ambitions as a Builder of Rome, and to realize what Villari has called the one object of his pontificate—the collection of ancient codices.

It will be remembered that Eugenius had promised coronation to Frederick III of Germany—the second founder of that Habsburg dynasty that has lately come to an end. The self-

<sup>1</sup> He is said to have constantly quoted Petrarca's *Spirito gentile* (see p. 157) as referring prophetically to himself.

<sup>2</sup> Strengthening his alliance with Alfonso of Naples, maintaining his friendship with Cosimo of Florence, ending the long quarrel with Francesco Sforza, and recalling the scholar Valla, who was a fugitive on account of his fierce opposition to the temporal ambitions of the Papacy.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

styled 'Holy Roman Emperor' who demanded papal unction from Nicholas must have been conscious that the function would be a ludicrous farce ; but doubtless his main object was a pontifical confirmation of a title which would bring him immense wealth by the sale of other titles and offices. To urge his demand he sent the learned Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (later Pope Pius II), who with high-flown eloquence extolled the divine origin and eternal grandeur of that Germanic Roman Empire which was now an empty fiction. Nicholas acquiesced unwillingly,<sup>1</sup> and hurried on the fortification of S. Angelo and the great Rocca that he had designed for the Vatican. Frederick had arranged to be wedded as well as crowned in Rome. His bride-elect, the beautiful and youthful Eleonora of Portugal, after a most unpleasant voyage of 104 days, arrived at Livorno and was met by him outside the Porta Camollia of Siena—where a column still records the meeting—and not long afterwards the German monarch was kissing the Pope's foot at the portal of St. Peter's in Rome. The wedding then took place, and it was followed by the first act of coronation, by which Frederick was dubbed King of the Lombards ; but as the Iron Crown was not to be had (being at Milan or Monza) the function lacked its most venerable and essential usage, and poor substitution was afforded by the silver crown used at the farcical coronations of 'Kings of the Romans' at Aachen. Then (March 18, 1452) took place the last coronation of a German Holy Roman Emperor that was ever performed in St. Peter's.<sup>2</sup> The ceremony entailed many humiliations for the submissive Emperor, who on the spot distributed—by no means gratuitously—an immense number of titles. He also reaped a rich harvest on his homeward journey, securing 4000 gold florins, for instance, from Borso of Ferrara (Table VIII), on whom he conferred the dukedom of Modena.

This resuscitation of feudal pomps was followed by a strong

<sup>1</sup> All the more so because, according to promises made by Eugenius, he had to pay 100,000 florins towards the expenses of Frederick's journey.

<sup>2</sup> The diadem used on this occasion belonged to the insignia kept at Nürnberg. It was perhaps the splendid so-called Charlemagne diadem, a picture of which is given in *Medieval Italy*.



## ROME (1400-1500)

but short-lived republican reaction. Porcari—or Porzio, as he called himself to signify his descent from the great Cato—had been relegated by Pope Nicholas to Bologna; but he escaped, and being joined by about 300 Romans (some doubtless actuated by the hope of immense booty) he plotted to assault the newly fortified Vatican and to capture the Pontiff—intending to fetter him with a golden chain that he carried with him for this purpose. But the plot was detected, and Porcari, whose sister had hidden him in a box of firewood, was discovered. Under torture he accused—doubtless falsely—the Sforza and the Government of Venice of having incited the plot. He was hanged, together with some of his accomplices, on January 9, 1453—after which day, it is said, Pope Nicholas—who felt deeply the tragic fate of the scholarly rebel—was never again seen to smile. His naturally nervous temperament made him live in constant dread of some catastrophe; and his anxieties were soon seriously increased by the news that on May 29 Mohammed II had captured Constantinople and had passed the bodies of 50,000 Christians as he entered in triumph the capital of the fallen Emperor, Constantine Palaeologus. Amid these troubles and dangers the one thing that occupied the Pope's mind was self-defence. The walls of his strongholds in Rome rose ever higher and higher, until, as says his biographer Manetti, 'only the birds of heaven could overpass them.' And a wiser method of self-defence was devised by him, for he arranged a meeting at Rome between envoys of Milan and Florence and those of Venice and Naples; which meeting finally led to the signing at Lodi of a defensive league against the Turks by these hitherto embittered foes.<sup>1</sup> This very gratifying success must have shed a pleasant light on the last days of the Pontiff, who died (March 24, 1455) just about two months after the alliance had been formally signed.

<sup>1</sup> Cosimo was a friend of the Sforza, while Venice, indignant at the Sforza's usurpation, was allied with Alfonso of Naples. This embitterment was increased by the support given by Florence to the Anjou claimant, *le bon roi René*. The reconciliation was due less to Nicholas V than to an Augustine monk, Simonetto da Camerino, who was indefatigable in visiting the various cities.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

A discourse held by him on his deathbed is preserved by Manetti, who seems to have been present. It reflects a good deal of justifiable self-satisfaction, and gives an interesting and perhaps fairly correct picture of what seems to have been a character finely intellectual and not ignoble but not what is usually called religious.

The connexion of Nicholas V with the new learning and with the art of the Quattrocento lends an additional interest to his pontificate. In another chapter I shall try to indicate the main lines of the Classical Revival, and shall describe the activity of some of the chief discoverers, collectors, and translators of ancient manuscripts, such as the celebrated Poggio, Valla, and Guarino. As collector of codices, and as employer of copyists and translators, Pope Nicholas did a great work, and he deserves well of posterity as the founder, or rather re-founder, of the vast Vatican Library. This library, as well as other ancient libraries in Rome, had in medieval times suffered greatly from neglect and spoliation<sup>1</sup> and almost all that remained of it at the beginning of the Trecento had been transferred to Avignon and was lost. Nicholas, whose fervid zeal for book-collecting had been first aroused by his Florentine experiences, is said to have presented his new library with over 5000 manuscripts, many of them ancient and of great value, others copied by his numerous scribes—for the Vatican in his day, says a chronicler, *fu una vera officina di copisti*. Of these treasures not a few were sold or given away by his successor, the first Borgia Pope, Calixtus III; but Sixtus IV, as we shall see, rebuilt the library of Nicholas and added greatly to its diminished stock of valuable manuscripts.

In regard to architecture, I have already mentioned the huge fortifications with which Nicholas V strengthened the city and the papal residences. He made gigantic plans<sup>2</sup> for

<sup>1</sup> Boccaccio describes how he visited the once magnificent library of Monte Cassino and found most of the valuable manuscripts ruined by neglect or mutilated by the monks, who used the parchment for the manufacture of missals, icons, etc.

<sup>2</sup> He employed the Florentine architect Rossellino, as well as the more famous Alberti, who dedicated to him his book on architecture.

## ROME (1400-1500)

the rebuilding of St. Peter's and enlargement of the Vatican, and although most of these were never carried out we owe to him the portion of the palace that contains the famous *Stanze* and the Oratory, or 'Studio,' that still bears his name and is adorned with the well-known frescos by Fra Angelico. Among his other architectural activities were the restoration of S. Stefano Rotondo, of S. Maria Maggiore, of S. Lorenzo and S. Paolo fuori, and of the Capitoline palace. Moreover he renewed the ancient Aqua Virgo and supplied it with a fountain at a spot where three streets met—the original of the well-known 'Fontana delle Tre Vie,' or 'di Trevi.'

Reverence for ancient art was not yet much developed. A few bits of sculpture had been discovered and placed in palaces or gardens, but the systematic search for old statues and other antiquities did not begin till the end of the Quattrocento.<sup>1</sup> Slight influences of the new Italian sculpture had found their way to Rome and Naples, but it was not till after the death of Nicholas that Mino da Fiesole, Filarete, and other Tuscans began to produce in Rome those early Renaissance tombs, tabernacles, and architectural sculptures for which Roman churches are famous. The bronze doors of St. Peter's by Filarete are not wholly unworthy rivals of those of the Florentine Baptistery.

As for painting, the one great event in this pontificate was the coming of Fra Angelico, who with his assistant, Benozzo Gozzoli, spent a considerable time in Rome. Of all that he there painted only the frescos remain which adorn the so-called 'Studio' of Pope Nicholas V, but these frescos are of superlative interest, showing a style almost entirely different from that of all other known paintings of the master.<sup>2</sup> Fra Angelico

<sup>1</sup> Strangely coincident with the discovery (in 1485) of the mummy of a beautiful ancient Roman woman, which for a time caused a hysterical excitement and an unbounded reverence for the past, was that of the Apollo Belvedere, found about the end of this century.

<sup>2</sup> The Sixtus II in these frescos (story of S. Lorenzo) is a portrait of Nicholas V. Fra Angelico had been first induced to visit Rome by Eugenius IV, whom he knew at Florence. His S. Marco frescos (1436-1442) show already a change in style, due to the study of Masaccio's Carmine frescos, but these Roman paintings are of another type.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

died in Rome, and on his tomb (in S. Maria sopra Minerva) is a Latin epitaph said to have been written by Nicholas—although he died just six days after the painter.

Three Popes of very diverse character intervene between Nicholas V and Sixtus IV. Their pontificates afford numerous points of interest, a few of which may here be briefly mentioned.

**Calixtus III** was the first of the arrogant and ill-famed Spanish clan of the Borgia that rose to eminence in the Church.<sup>1</sup> While still Bishop of Valencia, his native city, he accompanied King Alfonso of Aragon on his victorious campaign against Naples (1442) and was made cardinal by Eugenius IV. When elected Pope (1455) he was 77 years of age and a great martyr to gout. Indeed he seems to have spent most of his pontificate of three years in a hermetically closed sick-room, hovered round by a crowd of doctors and *nipoti*.<sup>2</sup> His one great ambition, besides the enrichment of his relatives, was to launch a crusade against the Turks—who two or three years before had taken Constantinople. Bulls and mendicant friars were dispatched, and bells were set ringing thrice daily through Western Christendom to incite the faithful to enlist. But there was faint response, and although the valiant Hungarian general, Hunyadi, inflicted in 1456 a crushing defeat on Mohammed II at Belgrad, he was not backed up, as had been arranged, by the fleet of Calixtus—the reason being that this fleet was appropriated by Alfonso of Naples for a private raid on Genoa, the Doge of which city he wished to depose. In order to equip this fleet Calixtus not only emptied the papal coffers but sold papal jewels and *regalia* and despoiled the Vatican Library of many precious manuscripts and splendid bindings. His fierce contempt for the architectural and humanist hobbies of Pope Nicholas was openly expressed: the riches of the Church should not be wasted on such follies.

<sup>1</sup> The Borgia clan produced two Popes, eight cardinals, a couple of princes, several dukes, etc. Calixtus was not quite a typical Borgia.

<sup>2</sup> These so-called *nipoti* (lat. *nepotes*), i.e. 'nephews,' of the Popes were in many cases their illegitimate progeny. Calixtus III was the first who practised 'nepotism' on an audaciously big scale. The Borgia arms, aptly enough, showed a ferocious Spanish bull. See *Papal Arms*, p. 254.



## R O M E (1400-1500)

The vast buildings begun by Nicholas were therefore demolished or abandoned; the multitudinous copyists and librarians and scholars of the Vatican were dismissed, and the palace was thronged by 'nephews' and their retinues, whose enormous expenses were defrayed by the pious offerings of the faithful. Two *nipoti* were made cardinals—one of them a youngster of 22 named Rodrigo Langol, afterwards the notorious Pope Alexander VI. A brother of this young hopeful, Don Pietro, was made Duke of Spoleto and Roman Prefect and Governor of S. Angelo, and for a time held almost dictatorial power in Rome. The audacity and effrontery of these Spanish Borgia—'Catalani' (Catalonians, Spanish mercenaries), as they were angrily and contemptuously designated by the citizens—seem to have surpassed all that Rome had ever suffered from triumphant Colonna or Orsini. 'Murders and robberies,' says a chronicler (Paolo da Ponte), 'were daily occurrences.' Suddenly, however, all this comes to an end. Calixtus dies, and the whole horde of 'Catalani' takes flight, fiercely pursued by the Orsini, who burn many of the Borgia palaces. Pietro escapes in a boat to Civitavecchia, and there he dies of malarial fever.

**Pius II** we have already met under his original name of Aeneas Silvius, a scion of the illustrious Sienese house of the Piccolomini. His early life was gay, literary, and adventurous. About 1431 he found his way across the Alps, and for over 20 years made his home at Basel, whence he wandered, generally as private secretary of some prelate, over many parts of Germany and as far as Scotland.<sup>1</sup> As secretary he took a notable part in the Council of Basel, upholding in his speeches (*Dialoghi*) the authority of Councils as against that of Popes and adhering to the German prelates, who refused to be dissolved by Eugenius IV and elected Antipope Felix. He was then employed in the Viennese Chancellor's office and

<sup>1</sup> He tried to reach the Orkneys, as he tells us in his *Commentaries*. In his joy at having reached the hyperborean regions of *ultima Thule* (i.e. Scotland) he made a pilgrimage on bare feet, and thereby contracted the gout (rheumatism?) which plagued him ever after.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

gained such influence over Frederick III (who bestowed on him the Laureate crown) that he brought him over to the side of Eugenius, whose cause he himself had now determined to adopt, as the star of Antipope Felix seemed to be sinking. Then, as we have seen, he aided Eugenius to return to Rome. Soon after we find him private secretary to Nicholas V, who made him Bishop of Trieste, and later of Siena, and employed him as envoy to Frederick III. Then he acted as envoy of Frederick to Nicholas and as *régisseur* of the farcical coronation scene (at Rome) of a Holy Roman Emperor. After the death of Nicholas he was created cardinal, and a couple of years later, when Calixtus III died, he was—perhaps as the only neutral in the conclave—elected Pope—to the surprise of himself and of many others, seeing that he was regarded as a clever diplomatist and an erudite and elegant scholar and writer, but as a man entirely lacking in the ambition, the masterfulness, the worldly wisdom, and other characteristics indispensable in a *papa re* and a patron of *nipoti*.

There were great rejoicings among the literates. They imagined the return of the Augustan age. But they were woefully deceived. The new Pontiff informed the world that he expected it to 'welcome Pius and repudiate Aeneas'; and he himself repudiated all his former literary productions—not only his youthful erotics and his antipapal Dialogues and his not always very proper effusions as 'humanist,' but his really valuable geographical and historical works. He turned his back on all his former ideals and devoted the rest of his life to the conversion, or the abolition, of the Grand Turk. As a long rhetorical-theological epistle addressed to Mohammed II remained unanswered, he set about proclaiming a crusade. Here, alas! failure awaited him, and the result was pathetic. Neither France nor Germany nor England showed any enthusiasm, and of the Italian states Venice alone—glad of any aid against her one great foe—promised co-operation. In 1464 Pius, though seriously ill of fever, embarked at Ponte Molle in a boat during the heats of summer, and after journeying slowly and painfully up the Tiber and being transported over

## ROME (1400-1500)

the Apennines in a litter, reached Ancona, where he had summoned his crusaders to assemble, but where he found only a horde of ruffian adventurers intent on pillage. He waited anxiously for nigh a month, daily becoming more dangerously ill. At last arrived Doge Cristoforo Moro with twelve Venetian galleys; but Pius was too ill to receive him, and three days later (August 15) he died—gazing, like Moses on Mount Nebo, say admiring chroniclers, across the sea towards that promised land which he had vainly longed to conquer. At Rome the architectural works of Pius II are unimportant,<sup>1</sup> but his native city of Siena is indebted to him, or his family, for several palaces. In an adjunct to the Duomo known as the *Biblioteca Piccolomini*, built by his nephew, Pius III, Pinturicchio not many years later, perhaps with the aid of Raphaël,<sup>2</sup> painted the well-known scenes from the life of the first and the greater of the two Piccolomini Popes.

**Paul II** (1464-71), a Venetian and a nephew of Eugenius IV, is said to have been a handsome, empty-headed, self-conceited and sensual person;<sup>3</sup> but he seems to have had (as his bust, perhaps by Mino da Fiesole, shows) some strength of character not wholly bad, for he gained popular favour by introducing markets and public granaries, and did much to improve the internal administration of the city and to suppress country brigandage. He showed masterfulness, moreover, if not love of letters, in expelling the great horde of scribes, rhetoricians, poets, scholars and their ilk that had found shelter in the Vatican; and when they continued for 20 days to clamour at the doors of his palace he arrested their ringleader, the famous Platina, and imprisoned him for some months in S. Angelo. His contempt for the revival of ancient literature did not prevent him from enthusiastically encouraging (as the Medici did at Florence) ancient Saturnalian licence in the

<sup>1</sup> His great 'Rocca' at Tivoli is impressive.

<sup>2</sup> This is scoffed at by Morelli, the late 'ear and finger-nail' judge of the authenticity of Italian pictures; but Raphaël was about 24 when Pinturicchio painted these frescos, and is believed to have been at that time in Siena.

<sup>3</sup> He wished to call himself 'Formosus' ('Handsome'), but the College of Cardinals objected.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

carnival festivities, but it did prevent him from sparing ancient buildings (the Colosseum and others) while constructing the huge palace of S. Marco—now called the Palazzo Venezia.<sup>1</sup>

### SIXTUS IV (1471-84)

The Della Rovere family,<sup>2</sup> which ere long was to boast of two Popes, a dozen cardinals, a Duke of Urbino, a lord of Imola, several Prefects of Rome, a Sforza alliance, and countless riches, first became illustrious in the person of Francesco, son of a skipper of Savona. As a child he had been devoted to the service of St. Francis, and after long years of toil and obscurity as a teacher in schools at Bologna, Florence, Siena, and Perugia, through the friendship of Cardinal Bessarione, a former pupil of his, he was made General of the Franciscan Minorites and in 1467 was granted by Paul II the cardinalate of the ancient Roman church of S. Pietro in Vincoli—so well known on account of Michelangelo's huge unfinished tomb of the second Rovere Pope, Julius II. One of the first acts of Francesco Rovere after his election as Pope was to assert himself as head of Christendom by proclaiming a crusade. But his appeal met with apathy and disdain, Venice, as usual, being about the only state that reacted; and the end of the matter was the dispatch of a small fleet to the Levant under the command of a cardinal who re-entered Rome with about 25 Turkish captives 'carried in triumph through the city on the backs of twelve camels' (Gregorovius). Another early symptom of the *rôle* he meant to play was nepotism of the most outrageous kind. Within four months he had elected Pietro Riario, commonly regarded as his bastard son, and an infamous libertine and

<sup>1</sup> Begun before his election as Pope. It changed its name when it was given over to the Venetians in exchange for a Venetian palace, and when the Austrians took possession of Venice it, rather strangely, passed into their possession. Still more strangely, after the Austrians were expelled from Venice it remained the property of the Austrian Government and was used till May 1915 as their embassy. In August 1916 it was quite rightly sequestrated by the Italian Government.

<sup>2</sup> *Róvere* (Lat. *robur*) is a name for a variety of oak—a fact that reminds one of Homer's assertion (falsified by the fortunes of this family) that 'no one is born from a rock or an oak.' I include here the Riarii, the Savona bastards or other relatives of Sixtus.



## ROME (1400-1500)

spendthrift, to the bishopric of Treviso, the patriarchate of Constantinople, and the archbishoprics of Florence and Seville, and had given cardinals' hats to him and to a nephew of his own, Giuliano, who later became Pope Julius II. And thus it went on until the Vatican swarmed with Rovere and Riario prelates and princely personages, while on the Capitol one of these satellites ruled as Prefect of the city.

Some idea of the state of things at the court of Pope Sixtus IV may be gained from the description given by Corio and other chroniclers of the visit of Leonora of Aragon, who passed through Rome in 1473 to join her expectant bridegroom, Ercole of Ferrara. It reads like a description of some scene of revelry at the court of Semiramis or Nero. The soul of all this indecent buffoonery was the young rake Cardinal Pietro, who won special applause for his *mise-en-scène* of a play called *Susanna and the Elders*, acted by Florentine comedians.

Six months later this dignitary of the Church died, aged 28, worn out by his licentious excesses; whereupon Pope Sixtus transferred his patronage to another 'nephew,' or bastard—namely Girolamo Riario, Pietro's brother, till then an obscure custom-house official at Savona—who in a short time found himself lord of Forli and Imola and husband of Caterina Sforza—that 'lady of Forli' whose daring and loyalty were so smirched by her vengeful cruelty.<sup>1</sup> About the same time

<sup>1</sup> He was assassinated in 1488, but Caterina continued to hold the towns for her son, Ottaviano, until in 1499 Caesar Borgia captured them. The Riarii-Sforza family is still extant in Naples. A fine portrait of Caterina by Vasari is in the Palazzo Vecchio; for she later married Giovanni Medici and became mother of the famous Giovanni delle Bande Nere.



CATERINA SFORZA  
(Vasari)

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

another Rovere, namely Giovanni, brother of the Pope, was wedded to the daughter of Frederic of Montefeltro, whom Sixtus created Duke of Urbino (see Table X). In 1477 another of the same litter was made cardinal—namely Raffaele Riario, a boy of 17, still at school at Pisa—nephew or bastard of the deceased prelate, Pietro.

Now at this time Pope Sixtus was beginning to discover that his friendship with Lorenzo de' Medici was a mistake, seeing that but for the Medici his *protégé*, Girolamo, might have made himself master of the whole of Romagna, and of Tuscany to boot. He determines to undermine, if possible, the power of these Medici, and begins by transferring from the Medicean bank in Rome to that of the Pazzi his vast capital—the proceeds of the sale of Indulgences and dignities and of Jubilees, now four times more frequent than of old. While in this state of feeling he is approached by Francesco Pazzi, his new banker, and by Girolamo Riario, who obtain his ready consent and his apostolic benediction for the execution of a shameful deed that they have plotted, namely the assassination of Lorenzo and his brother Giuliano. How the fiendish crime is attempted in the Florentine Cathedral at the moment when the young cardinal, Raffaele Riario, is elevating the host—how the chivalrous and beloved Giuliano is slaughtered and Lorenzo escapes—and how the Florentines take vengeance for the cowardly and brutal murder and shout with exultation as they see the corpses of Francesco Pazzi and his accomplice, the Archbishop of Pisa, dangling from a window of the Palazzo Vecchio—all this will be told fully in the chapter on Florence. As for Raffaele, who was perhaps not an accomplice but a tool, he was imprisoned, but finally released, as his guilt could not be wholly proved; but he bore, it is said, for the rest of his life a terrified expression on his pallid face. In his wrath at the failure of this murderous plot, Pope Sixtus incited wars against Lorenzo and laid Florence under Interdict, and though it defied his thunderbolts it suffered serious defeats. Then Lorenzo, to save his country from disaster, most gallantly undertook a perilous journey to







21. POPE ALEXANDER VI



## ROME (1400-1500)

Naples and succeeded in winning the friendship and alliance of King Ferrante.

The capture of Otranto by the Turks in 1480 and their withdrawal on account of the death of the great Sultan, Mohammed the Second (events that are related elsewhere), did not much affect Rome or the Papacy—although it is said that Sixtus was with difficulty prevented from fleeing to France when he heard of the landing of the infidels in Italy, and that his alarm caused him to come to terms with Florence.

During the last few years of his life he was occupied in various ignoble wars. He most disgracefully attacked Duke Ercole of Ferrara,<sup>1</sup> which city he hoped, with the help of the Venetians, to steal for his 'nephew' Girolamo and then annex to the papal dominions; but he was assailed by the Neapolitans under Alfonso, son of old King Ferrante, and in Rome he had serious trouble with the republican-minded Colonna (whose leader, Lorenzo Colonna, he tortured most barbarously and executed after promising him pardon), and at last, having deserted the Venetians and secured, as he thought, the alliance of Lodovico of Milan, he was repaid for all his treacheries by being in turn deserted; and his fury on receiving the news of the Peace of Bagnolo, by which Venice, Naples, Milan, and Florence made up their quarrels, is said to have caused his death (August 12, 1484).<sup>2</sup>

It is pleasant to turn from the man to some noble works of architecture and painting that are associated with his name. One of these is the world-famous Sistine Chapel, the side-walls of which are still adorned with magnificent frescos by artists (Botticelli, Pinturicchio, Perugino, Ghirlandaio, Signorelli, and Rosselli) summoned by him to Rome. Under this chapel was housed in spacious vaulted halls the Vatican library, which, as we have seen, had been refounded by Nicholas V and had been seriously despoiled by the Borgia Pope Calixtus III. As librarian he elected the erudite scholar Platina (Bart. Sacchi),

<sup>1</sup> It was this war that drove Savonarola from Ferrara to Florence.

<sup>2</sup> *Audito tantum nomine pacis obit*, said a contemporary epigram quoted by Guicciardini.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

who, it will be remembered, had been imprisoned in S. Angelo by Paul II. Besides the Florentine and Umbrian painters above mentioned we hear of Filippino Lippi at Rome, and the fine artist Melozzo da Forli, scholar of Piero della Francesca and intimate friend of Raphael's father, Giovanni Santi of Urbino. This Melozzo was one of the chief members of an academy of painters founded by Sixtus, and was employed by him (or by the young libertine Cardinal Pietro) to paint the apse of SS. Apostoli; and the well-known and lovely "angel musicians" now preserved in the Sacristy of St. Peter's are fragments of the great *Ascension* that Melozzo painted in this church. There is also in the Vatican picture-gallery a very remarkable fresco by him (Fig. 20) which once adorned a wall in the Sistine Library.<sup>1</sup> It was painted by order of Sixtus IV, and represents him commissioning Platina in the presence of Giuliano Rovere (Julius II) and Girolamo Riario.

Also the architects chiefly employed by Sixtus IV were Tuscan. We hear of a certain Pintelli of Florence and of Caprino of Settignano, who furnished SS. Apostoli and S. Pietro in Vincoli and other Roman churches with façades, and built S. Pietro in Montorio.<sup>2</sup> The bridge of S. Angelo was cleared of its shops and other disfiguring buildings at this time, and the old Janiculan bridge rebuilt and called, as now, Ponte Sisto. Sixtus is also said to have widened and paved some of the principal streets and to have begun the collection of antiquities that later developed into the Capitoline Museum.

Of the 25 cardinals, three, Ascanio Sforza (brother to Il Moro), Giuliano Rovere (nephew of Sixtus and later Pope Julius II), and Rodrigo Borgia (nephew of Calixtus and later Pope Alexander VI), seemed the most likely to be chosen. The Borgia felt so sure of election that he fortified his palace, to prevent its being pillaged,<sup>3</sup> but he was so hated and feared that his rivals combined and sold their votes to a socially,

<sup>1</sup> The library was later moved by Sixtus V to the present splendid halls.

<sup>2</sup> Some say it was built by Pintelli, employed by Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, c. 1500.

<sup>3</sup> A prerogative claimed by the populace when a new Pope had possessed as cardinal a residence in Rome.

## ROME (1400-1500)

politically, and theologically colourless individual of weakly, affable, and voluptuously sensuous character, namely Giambattista Cibo, a Genoese, whose father had been viceroy of Naples under the Angevin king, René. He had been made Bishop of Savona by Pius II and had been given the purple by Sixtus IV.

The pontificate of Cibo (**Innocent VIII**) contains little that is worth recording. Politically it was unimportant (useful, says Guicciardini, only because idle sensuality kept him from political ambitions), and in regard to the arts the one fact to his credit is the building and decorating <sup>1</sup> of that square villa which Julius II connected with the Vatican palace by a porticoed court, and which is known so well nowadays as the 'Belvedere.' The Pope's weak character and self-indulgent life <sup>2</sup> fostered in Rome and Latium such anarchy, and among the clerics such crimes and vice, as only the darkest former ages had ever known. The Colonna and the Orsini had revived their bloody feuds. 'Dagger and poison,' says Villari, 'were everywhere at work. Every evening the corpses found lying in the streets were thrown into the Tiber. . . . Not only all dignities but indulgences for all crimes (even the murder of his daughter by a vile father) were sold for money.' Not without reason did Lorenzo de' Medici, a month before his death in 1492, tell his son, Cardinal Giovanni (later Pope Leo X, now a youth of 18), as he was setting out to visit the papal court—and his sister Maddalena—that Rome was 'the sink of all iniquities.' When the young Medicean cardinal arrived he found Innocent seriously ill. 'Amidst all the diabolical orgies of the papal court,' says the same writer, 'the Pope now and then fell into a lethargy that was mistaken for

<sup>1</sup> Built from a design by that marvellous master of many arts, Antonio Pollaiuolo, and decorated by Mantegna, whose frescos were, alas! later destroyed. Not having been paid, Mantegna inserted in a painting a figure representing Thrift. Innocent thereupon advised him to add the figure of Patience.

<sup>2</sup> He was the first to acknowledge unblushingly his bastards, who were numerous. One of them, Franceschetto, who was 'passed off officially as his nephew,' married Maddalena de' Medici, daughter of Lorenzo the Magnificent.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

death ; but he would awaken from his trance, and thereupon the revelries began once more, and assassination became again the order of the day.'

Some two months after the death of Lorenzo the Magnificent—whom the doctors had tried to save by a dose of powdered diamond—the Hebrew doctor of the dying Innocent, Gregorovius tells us, thought to infuse new life into his veins by injecting blood drawn from children. Three boys of ten years were bought for this purpose, and all three died in consequence of the operations—which proved useless.

### ALEXANDER VI

The Witches' Sabbath known as the pontificate of Rodrigo Borgia, or Alexander VI, is a subject that must needs be no less painful to those who regard him and his ilk as veritable Vicars of the pure and gentle Jesus than it is repulsive to those who are obliged to rake up what were perhaps best left to rot in oblivion. One must, however, allow that there are facts connected with this Pope and his infamous bastard which are of importance historically, and there are persons who find the characters of the Borgia interesting psychologically ; indeed there are some whose interest in the subject, or whose wish to attract attention, has resulted in explanation, exculpation, condonation, and even a qualified admiration. These advocates ask us to regard the statements of contemporary chroniclers, such as Burkhard, Infessura, and Guicciardini, as malignant fabrications, and extol the ambitious policy of Alexander and the crafty and ruthless acts of his son as due to a patriotic desire to found a strong state as a bulwark against barbarian invasion.<sup>1</sup>

The day before—or after—the election of Rodrigo Borgia four mules laden with gold carried to the palace of Ascanio

<sup>1</sup> For the whitewashing of Alexander and Caesar Borgia see Sabatini's wildly extravagant and unjudicial work. Lucrezia, perhaps with a little more justification, has been somewhat rehabilitated by the monograph of Gregorovius. (In his *History of the City of Rome* he gives pictures of the Borgia more consistent with acknowledged facts.) The whitewashing process did not meet the approval of the greatest modern authority, Senator Villari.



## ROME (1400-1500)

Sforza the price of his vote. The Conclave had resembled an auction, and this dearly bought vote of the Sforza cardinal had diverted, for a time, the papal tiara from the grasp of Giuliano Rovere and placed it on the head of the Spaniard, who at the announcement of his success, it is said, called out triumphantly, 'I am Pope, I am Pope—the Vicar of Christ!'

Rodriguez Borgia was born near Valencia in 1431. He studied at Bologna and was made bishop and cardinal by his uncle, Calixtus III. His riotous and licentious life brought on him a severe reprimand from Pope Pius II. In 1470, after many transitory amours, he adopted as his mistress Vanozza de' Cattanei, whom he supplied successively with three nominal husbands. She bore him several children, of whom one, Giovanni, Duke of Gandia, has been handed down to the pity, and another—Caesar—to the execration, and a third, Lucrezia, to the mingled pity and execration of posterity.

I shall not attempt any full and connected account of the state of things that prevailed at the papal court during the next ten years, but shall merely give a few brief statements of what I believe to be facts—evidence for which may be found in the writers whom I have mentioned by any who may desire to form an independent opinion.

Shortly before his election the Borgia had given up Vanozza<sup>1</sup> and had installed in her place the young wife of an Orsini noble, Giulia Farnese (sister to the future Pope Paul III), who during the first period of Alexander's pontificate seems to have assisted as Queen of Revels and as his publicly acknowledged mistress. For instance, at the sumptuous wedding of Lucrezia,<sup>2</sup> the Pope's bastard daughter—then just 13 years of age—we

<sup>1</sup> Vanozza was now about 50 years old. She continued to reside in Rome, where she possessed a palace, and kept up relations with her children. After Caesar's fall and death she was unmolested. She lived till 1513, devoting her old age to good works. Her rival, *la bella Giulia*, outlived her eleven years.

<sup>2</sup> When eleven years old she had gone through a marriage ceremony with a Spanish count, but when her father became Pope she was bought off and wedded (1493) to Giov. Sforza, lord of Pesaro, from whom she was separated by the order of her father. Her third husband, Duke of Bisceglie, was murdered by her brother, Caesar. Her fourth was Alfonso I, Duke of Ferrara, brother to Beatrice d'Este.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

are told (by Infessura) that 'things incredible took place,' and that 'among the company was Madonna Giulia, the concubine of His Holiness.' It was about this time probably that the fresco by Pinturicchio was painted in which, as says Vasari, the Madonna—that is, the Virgin—and the adoring Pontiff were portraits of Madonna Giulia and her pontifical lover.<sup>1</sup> 'Meantime,' says Gregorovius in his *Lucrezia Borgia*, 'Rome swarmed with assassins, Spaniards, and loose women, and crimes of all kinds abounded. Alexander appeared at the chase and the promenade surrounded by armed men, and often attended by Prince Djem and the Duke of Gandia, both in Turkish costume; or he might be seen among his women clad in Spanish dress, with high boots and dagger and an elegant velvet cap.'

On the last day of the year 1494 the King of France, Charles VIII, enters Rome. Alexander is inclined to resist, but Charles points his guns at S. Angelo. Thereupon the Pontiff with a bad grace submits,<sup>2</sup> and after reading High Mass before his enemy in St. Peter's (at which function he had to get a cardinal to act as prompter—'so little accustomed was he to perform religious ceremonies') he gives over as hostages his bastard son, Caesar (now Cardinal of Valencia), and the Turkish prince, Djem,<sup>3</sup> and manages to hoodwink the

<sup>1</sup> In the Sala Borgia (Vatican) there is a fresco of a Madonna still extant, but it seems to be a portrait of Lucrezia, and has no adoring Pope. In a neat epigram the contemporary scholar Sannazzaro asks (in allusion to the Borgia arms—p. 254), *Europen Tyrio quondam sedisse juvenco Quis neget? Hispano Julia vecta bove est.*

<sup>2</sup> Alexander scoffed at the ease with which Charles was allowed to parade through Italy 'with wooden spurs and a bit of chalk in his hand' (to mark doors for the quartering of his troops), but the laugh turned against the Pope when it was reported through Italy with merriment that Charles had captured 'the concubine of His Holiness.'

<sup>3</sup> Djem, younger son of Mohammed II, the conqueror of Constantinople, fought his brother, Bajazet, for the sultanate, and when defeated fled to Egypt, and then to Rhodes, where the Knights of St. John got hold of him and extracted huge sums from Bajazet, who feared his release. Then he was transferred to France; then sold by the Knights to Pope Innocent VIII. At Rome he is interned in the Vatican, but allowed considerable liberty, and he treats all with disdain, refusing to kneel to the Pope, etc. The Sultan pays 40,000 ducats yearly for his safe-keeping, but sends assassins to murder him,

## R O M E (1400-1500)

weak-minded King, craftily biding his time till his intrigues have combined Milan, Venice, Spain, and Germany against the French invader, who, as we know, withdraws ingloriously from Italy. On the departure of the French and the re-establishment of the fugitive Ferdinand II on the throne of Naples (aided by papal and Colonna soldiery) Pope Alexander recovers from his fright and begins to exhibit his true character still more audaciously. The assassins and mercenaries by whom he endeavours to extirpate the hated Orsini (now still more his embittered foes on account of Giulia) fill Rome with terror, until in a furious fight near Lake Bracciano, 20 miles north of Rome, these nobles rout his troops, taking prisoner his ally Guidobaldo, Duke of Urbino, and seriously wounding the Duke of Gandia. Then Alexander thinks it better to come to terms.

This Duke of Gandia was the Pope's eldest son. He seems to have been a blunt, soldierly personage. A few months after this fight he was made Duke of Benevento by Alexander, who probably had the ambition to set him on the throne of Naples—the young Ferdinandino having lately died. These brilliant prospects excited intense envy and hatred<sup>1</sup> in the heart of his brother, Caesar, who had most unwillingly received the tonsure and had been elected cardinal (in a batch of twelve) shortly after his father's elevation to the papacy. On June 14, 1497, the two brothers supped at the palace of their mother, Vanozza, and set out homewards together. The Duke's mule was next morning found wandering about riderless, and on the evidence of a charcoal-seller, who in the dead of night had seen a corpse hurled into the Tiber (a sight he had seen 'more than a hundred times before'), the river was dragged and the body of the

and offers 300,000 ducats for his dead body. Charles VIII, as we have seen, gets possession of him, expecting to make a fortune out of him; but he dies at Capua—perhaps poisoned by the Pope. It should be remembered that the Pope had first tried to persuade Charles VIII to attack the Turkish Sultan instead of Italy, and had then sent envoys to the Sultan begging help against Charles.

<sup>1</sup> Other motives for jealousy, unmentionable and almost incredible, are insinuated by Guicciardini, who asserts that Lucrezia's rejected husband, Giov. Sforza, brought a similar charge even against Alexander himself (iii, 6).

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

unfortunate young man was discovered with hands lashed together and head and throat gashed with wounds.

Frenzied by passionate grief, Pope Alexander shut himself up in his chamber, refusing food, weeping and uttering piercing lamentations like David for several days and nights and ever and again exclaiming that he knew well the murderer; and although later he denied all knowledge, there was very little doubt on the subject in his or in anybody's mind. In a transient access of penitence he proclaimed his intention of reforming the papal court and his own life, and actually designated a committee of six cardinals to help him in this undertaking. But very soon he had recovered his balance and was careering downwards more madly than ever <sup>1</sup>—*più sfrenatamente che mai*, says Guicciardini; nor less mad was the Phaethonian career of the young fratricide, who having given up his 'holy orders' and his cardinal's hat—his pontifical father solemnly consenting to his unfrocking and the return of the hat 'for the salvation of his beloved son's soul'—was sent (1498) as papal envoy to France, bearing a Bull of divorce for Louis XII, who wished to rid himself of his wife and wed the widow of Charles VIII. For this visit to the French court Caesar was furnished, it is said, with a very large sum of money—a fact worth mentioning if it be really true, as Villari and others assert, that the Pope and his son acquired this money by 'making false charges against no less than 300 persons and then allowing them to purchase acquittal.'

At Paris Caesar received the title of Duc de Valence,<sup>2</sup> and the French king, who himself was planning his invasion of the Milan duchy, promised him troops for the conquest of Romagna, which Pope Alexander wished by the military prowess of his son to secure as papal dominion. At the French court was at this time Carlotta, the daughter of Frederic III, the last of the Aragonese kings of Naples (1496-1501). Caesar, whose

<sup>1</sup> It was in May 1498 that Savonarola, after fierce persecution by Alexander VI, was put to death. See chapter on Florence.

<sup>2</sup> He is generally called *Il Valentino* by Guicciardini and other Italian writers.



## ROME (1400-1500)

greatest ambition it was to become King of Naples (as well as Romagna) made proposal for her hand,<sup>1</sup> but both she and her father, who was of a nature wise and noble, repelled with horror these advances. Another Charlotte, daughter, or sister, of the King of Navarre, was then chosen, and by his marriage with her the Borgia became related to the royal house of France.

When, in 1499, Louis XII enters Milan, Caesar Borgia with a French retinue and a French flag is there to greet him, and takes advantage of the occasion to raise great loans from Milanese nobles. Meanwhile at Rome his sire, Pope Alexander, is assiduously collecting funds for the Romagna campaign 'by a new series of assassinations' (Villari). Then, sufficiently provided with men and money, he attacks and masters Cesena, Imola, and Forlì—the last city being for a time valiantly defended by Caterina Sforza (p. 241). But, as we know, Lodovico il Moro, who had fled from Milan to Germany on the approach of Louis XII, soon returned; whereupon Louis recalled the French contingent that he had lent for the Romagna campaign. Caesar therefore decided to return to Rome. Here great *fêtes* had been planned by Alexander in connexion with the Jubilee of 1500, and vast sums of money were being raised for further campaigns and conquests in Romagna by the offerings of pilgrims, the sale of Indulgences, and methods even more nefarious. Ere long, too, the glad news arrived of the return of the French to Milan and the capture of Lodovico.

Two months later Caesar assassinated his sister Lucrezia's

<sup>1</sup> Caesar's motive for renouncing orders was in the first instance probably a criminal passion for his younger brother's wife, Sancia of Aragon. This younger brother, Geoffrey, had through his wife (a Neapolitan princess) become Prince of Squillace, and having some distant claim to the Neapolitan crown, ran a very fair risk of being assassinated by Caesar like his brother Giovanni, Duke of Gandia. The passion for the frivolous Sancia in time gave place to an ambition to wed this daughter, and at that time heiress, of King Frederic, who had lately succeeded to the throne of Naples. This being foiled, Caesar, as we shall see, murders the Duke of Bisceglie, his sister Lucrezia's husband, who, as illegitimate son of Alfonso II, might have had some claim to the succession. The strong desire of Caesar to make himself King of Naples explains a good deal that is often unexplained.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

third husband, the Duke of Bisceglie. His hirelings, who attacked their victim on the steps of St. Peter's basilica, failed to dispatch him, but Caesar forced his way into the Duke's bedroom in the Vatican and strangled him—or had him strangled.<sup>1</sup> This murder was openly acknowledged by the perpetrator and justified as an act of self-defence (!), while the Pope merely remarked that 'Caesar had a very fiery temper, and if he did it, it was probably deserved.' The truth is that Alexander was now so entirely under the ban of his bastard's fiery temper that he dared make no objections—not even when a favourite attendant of his was stabbed to death in his arms by Caesar, 'so that the blood,' says the Venetian ambassador, Paolo Cappello, then in Rome, 'spurted into the Pope's face.'

Furnished with troops and funds—towards which the purses of a dozen new-elected cardinals contributed 120,000 ducats—Caesar renews his campaigns, the horrors of which have seldom been equalled. By cunning and by bloodshed he makes himself master of Pesaro (the city of Lucrezia's former husband, Giovanni Sforza) and Rimini, whence he ejects the Malatesta, and Faenza, the youthful lord of which he captures together with his brother (and later murders at Rome and casts into the Tiber). As a reward for these deeds of heroism he is dubbed Captain-General of the Church and Duke of Romagna by his father; and during the next two years he lords it tyrannically at Rome and continues his bloodthirsty conquests. In 1501 he joins the French and Spaniards in their infamous attack on King Frederic of Naples (see p. 274). In 1502 by most vile treachery he gained possession of Urbino, whence the courtly and gentle Guidobaldo (known to all who know the *Cortegiano*) fled to Venice, leaving the beautiful palace of Duke Frederic with all its treasures and its splendid library to be pillaged by the Spanish marauder. It was now evident that Caesar, with the help of his father and the French king, intended to make himself King of Central Italy—and of the

<sup>1</sup> This is distinctly intimated, if not directly stated, by the contemporary diarists Burkhard and Sanudo, and by other old chroniclers, statesmen, etc.



(a) CESARE BORGIA



(b) LUCREZIA BORGIA





23. ALFONSO'S TRIUMPHAL ARCH, NAPLES



## ROME (1400-1500)

Southern Regno too; and he probably hoped that Louis would add to his realm the duchy of Milan. But before any such design could be realized Florence and Siena would have to be mastered, and the Florentine Republic was brave enough to defy what Bishop Creighton vigorously describes as a 'pack of ragamuffins led by the unfrocked bastard of a priest.'

At this critical moment fate, or Providence, interfered. The number of murders perpetrated by Pope Alexander and his son cannot be ascertained exactly, but it was certainly large. There can be no reasonable doubt that not a few cardinals<sup>1</sup> were poisoned by them, and perhaps Alexander's death was due, as was generally believed at the time, to a mistake in regard to the poisoned cup prepared for the wealthy Cardinal Adriano—a mistake that reminds one of Hamlet and Bianca Cappello; or it may have been due to poison mixed by some avenger; or possibly to fever, as many later writers insist.<sup>2</sup> However that may be, it seems certain that both

<sup>1</sup> *E.g.* Cardinals Ferrari, Orsini, and Michiel. Note in passing that Sabatini says, 'assuming that Alexander did cause the death of Cardinal Orsini (as guilty of high treason against the papal temporal power) the only just censure that could fall upon him concerns the means employed. Yet even against that it might be urged that thus was the dignity of the purple saved the dishonouring touch of the hangman's hands.' This is a fair specimen of the arguments used by this modern advocate of the two Borgia. The riches of their victims went to swell the wealth of the Borgia; and vast sums were paid for election to the vacant dignities. How far Lucrezia was an accomplice is doubtful. For some time she was her father's representative (*vicaressa*), and, even if not present—as chroniclers affirm—at bestial orgies that undoubtedly took place in the Vatican, she seems to have acquiesced in these nauseating performances. At the end of 1501 she had married her fourth husband, Alfonso, later Duke of Ferrara.

<sup>2</sup> All the contemporary chroniclers (Guicciardini, Burkhard, Bembo, Sanudo, etc.) give the poison story, and many describe the horrid sight of the swollen corpse. Less credible perhaps is the assertion that a fiend in the form of an ape carried him off, and that at the gate of hell entrance was refused—an echo, probably, of Dante's famous line: *Nè lo profondo Inferno gli riceve*. Burkhard, who was at this time master of ceremonies at the papal court, uses very bitter language. He says in his *Diario* that it was with great difficulty that two servants were persuaded to robe the body in pontifical robes, and that not one single taper was lighted before the bier in St. Peter's. Thousands, he adds, flocked to the Vatican, not to kiss, as usual, the exposed toe of the dead Pope, but to 'feed their infuriated gaze with the sight of the serpent that had poisoned the world'—perhaps an allusion to

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

father and son became seriously ill after a banquet that took place in a vineyard of Cardinal Adriano's near the Vatican. Alexander died; Caesar slowly recovered. Machiavelli tells us (*Prin.* 7) that Caesar said 'he had taken foresight for every contingency except becoming mortally ill' (*di stare anche lui per morire*). Perhaps, as Gregorovius remarks, this illness



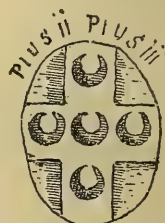
COLONNA



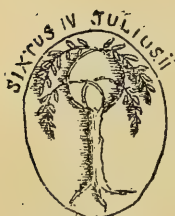
PARENTUCELLI



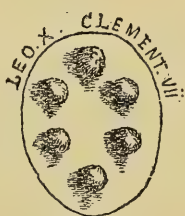
BORGIA



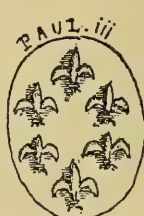
PICCOLONINI



DELLA ROVERE



MEDICI



FARNESE



BARBERINI

### PAPAL ARMS

saved the Papacy from subversion and Rome from a tyranny worse than that of Ezzelino. Anyhow, his prolonged illness gave his enemies a great advantage and hastened his fall, which was not long delayed. 'The power and rule of Duke Valentino,' says Nardi, the contemporary Florentine chronicler, 'disappeared like smoke in air, or foam on water.' The good, mild old cripple who was elected as Pope Pius III (a Piccolomini, and nephew of Pius II) only reigned 26 days—during which amidst great disorders Caesar was besieged by the

Dante's description of the monstrous dragon, Geryon, . . . *la fiera che tutto il mondo appuzza*.

## ROME (1400-1500)

infuriated partisans of the Orsini in the Castle of S. Angelo. For a time his negotiations with the new Pope, Julius II, seemed likely to prove successful,<sup>1</sup> but early in 1504 he betook himself to Ostia and thence to Naples, where Gonsalvo, the Spanish viceroy of Ferdinand the Catholic, received him in the most friendly fashion and immediately afterwards arrested and imprisoned him. Finally he was transferred to Spain, whence he escaped to France, and in 1507 he was killed in battle while fighting for his relation, the King of Navarre.

Any real interest in matters artistic or intellectual could not be expected from such a Pontiff as Alexander VI. The only important buildings on which he spent his ill-gotten wealth were the Castle of S. Angelo, which he furnished with various ramparts and a moat, and the Vatican, in which he completed a tower and a suite of apartments begun by Nicholas V. These are still named the *Torre Borgia* and the *Sala Borgia*. They were richly decorated by Pinturicchio with frescos, which suffered much at the sack of Rome in 1527 but still offer us portraits (alas! more than half the work of a German restorer) of Alexander, Lucrezia Borgia, Prince Djem, and other interesting persons of the period.

It was during Alexander's pontificate, viz. in 1499, that Bramante came to Rome. The very fine early Renaissance palace, celebrated for its 44 ancient columns and now called the *Cancelleria*, was one of the first of his Roman works. It was built for Cardinal Raffaele Riario about 1495. Another well-known Roman edifice, SS. Trinità de' Monti, was originally built (of French marble) by the French cardinal of Saint-Malo on the occasion of the visit of Charles VIII to Rome in 1495. It was rebuilt in 1816, having been destroyed at the time of the French Revolution.

<sup>1</sup> It was at this time that Caesar Borgia met Machiavelli at Rome and had with him much intercourse. As all know, Machiavelli takes Caesar for his model *Principe* in his famous book.

## CHAPTER II

### NAPLES (1400-1500)

**A**T the beginning of the century **Ladislaus** (or Ladislas) had been King of Naples for 14 years. The main events of his reign have been given in the Historical Outline. What details can here be added will not tell us much about Naples itself—there is indeed comparatively little known about the internal history of Naples under the Angevins and Aragonese—nor is there anything of importance to be said about art or literature in this chapter; but a few sketches may help us to form mental pictures of some interesting if not all very admirable personalities, of whom Ladislaus was by no means the worst.

As soon as he came of age and had freed himself from the regency of his mother, Margherita, he began to act vigorously, using the wealth of his wife Costanza <sup>1</sup> for hiring *condottieri* and mercenary troops. As we have seen, he soon drove across the Alps his rival, the French-Angevin pretender, Louis II, and during the next few years succeeded more than once in making himself temporarily master of Rome and of the Papal States; and had he lived longer he would very probably have made himself king of a great part of Italy, with Rome as his capital. Indeed Gregorovius tells us that 'the audacious spirit of Ladislaus aimed at the sole kingship of Italy—nay, at the Imperial crown itself. On his mantle he caused to be embroidered the words *Aut Caesar aut nihil*.'

Such ambitions necessarily aimed at the overthrow of the temporal power of the Papacy. It is therefore important to note his relations with contemporary Popes, Roman, Pisan,

<sup>1</sup> One of the enormously wealthy Sicilian Chiaramonti. He soon divorced her and married Maria, daughter of the Lusignan King of Cyprus.



## NAPLES (1400-1500)

and Schismatic. Boniface IX was the first of these. On coming of age the young King had been granted investiture by this 'legitimate' Pope, who was a Neapolitan. He had therefore naturally sided with him against the French Schismatic Pope, 'Benedict XIII,' and might have been expected to support his Roman successors; but ere long his ambitious projects led him to attack Rome, and Gregory XII, who held his court there, took flight, leaving the city in the hands of the Orsini. Ladislaus, who was supported by Colonna refugees, beleaguered the Romans by land while his galleys captured Ostia and ascended the river. He pitched his camp near S. Paolo fuori, as Totila and as his own ancestor, Charles of Anjou, had done, and soon the Orsini capitulated (1408). Hereupon he held a triumphal entry, riding beneath a magnificent *baldacchino* borne by nobles and followed by a multitude with palm-branches and torches, while all the bells of Rome and a general illumination gave welcome to the new master, who received homage as king from the chief citizens and set a viceroy over the city. Florence, Siena, Lucca, and other cities sent envoys to congratulate him, and ere long his troops entered without opposition many of the principal towns of the Papal States and Umbria, a great part of which regions he annexed to his Neapolitan kingdom.

The daring impetuosity and the brilliant success of the youthful conqueror seem to have fascinated the Romans, who accepted submissively the rule of his viceregent. The fugitive Pope too, who was in great difficulties on account of the Council of Pisa, found it advisable to make overtures to Ladislaus, and the result was (if we can believe chroniclers cited by Gregorovius) that this Pope, Gregory XII, ceded to the King the city of Rome and all the States of the Church for the sum of 25,000 golden florins—'an event unique in the history of the Papacy'! This advantageous bargain<sup>1</sup> induced Ladislaus to undertake another vigorous campaign northwards in order to master the rest of the Papal States (Bologna and

<sup>1</sup> Gregory, of course, knew that he was on the point of being deposed by the Pisan Council—an event that took place three months later.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

the Marche) and to attack Pisa, whence he intended to expel the obnoxious Council. He was, however, met not only by the excommunicatory thunderbolts of the 'Pisan Pope,' the short-lived Alexander V, but by the allied forces of Florence and Siena and the French-Angevin pretender, the so-called Louis II, commanded by such skilful leaders as Braccio, Attendolo Sforza, and the cardinal-condottiere Baldassare Cossa, and was little by little driven south until the ex-pirate and militant cardinal, Cossa, who had been elected Pope (John XXIII) by the Pisan Council, entered Rome in triumph, together with Louis of Anjou. Ladislaus, obliged to retire beyond the Liris, soon afterwards (May 1411) suffered a very severe defeat at Roccasecca. He barely escaped with his life, but displayed great courage and energy in collecting another army, while the feeble Louis, in spite of his victory and his triumphal reception at Rome, renounced all further attempts and, bidding farewell to Pope John, returned to France.

The Pope, with an ex-condottiere's contempt for his weak-kneed ally, transfers his admiration to the warlike Ladislaus. A treaty is concluded; but it is soon broken. The King, aided by the military genius of Attendolo Sforza, whom he had persuaded to join him, once more appears before Rome, and, his troops having entered through a breach in the Aurelian wall near the ancient basilica of Sta Croce in Gerusalemme, he is soon once more master of the city. This time he treats it with pitiless cruelty, sacking, burning, and desecrating. St. Peter's is pillaged and used as a stable for cavalry. Hundreds of Romans are transported into the Regno as convicts. Pope John had already galloped off northwards to crave the help of Sigismund, Germanic 'King of the Romans,' against the new King of Rome, and the fickle mob of Quirites throng once more the streets with torches and palm-branches, vociferating hosannas to their present lord.

Leaving Rome in the charge of various officials—one of whom takes the Pope's place as governor of the Vatican—Ladislaus returned to Naples to make preparations for another northern campaign, the main object of which was the capture

## NAPLES (1400-1500)

of Bologna and of Pope John. When he again reached Rome, and was met by a great multitude at Porta San Giovanni and in the neighbouring piazza of the Lateran basilica, a thing took place which shows the masterfulness and impetuosity of his character and his contempt for the ecclesiastics. Seeing the portal of the basilica open he 'entered on horseback,' as scandalized chroniclers relate, 'into the mother-church of Christendom and made the priests bring forth and show to him the heads of the holy apostles'—namely the heads of St. Peter and St. Paul—those possibly genuine and jealously guarded relics that are yet preserved in the great Gothic Tabernacle standing in the midst of the church. He now once more sets forth, intent on the conquest of Umbria and the Marche and Bologna, and doubtless of Tuscany too. But Florence is on the alert and foils his designs, and suddenly, at Perugia, he is struck down by disease, or by poison.<sup>1</sup> He is carried back to Rome on a litter and tended for a time in that convent of S. Paolo fuori which he knew so well in earlier days. Thence transported, dying, in a galley to Naples, he dies there on August 6, 1414, at the age of only 36 years.<sup>2</sup>

### JOANNA II (1414-35)

As Ladislaus left no children the crown passed to his no longer juvenile sister, Giovanna or Joanna, who, whether or not she deserved her meed of infamy as fully as her namesake,

<sup>1</sup> Administered—so goes the tale—by a bribed Perugian chemist, who persuaded his daughter, beloved by the King, to smear herself with a venomous unguent.

<sup>2</sup> To attempt to tell the story of Italy during these ages is like trying to perform the juggler's feat of keeping a dozen plates spinning. Without losing sight of Naples let us here take a hasty side-glance at Rome. On the death of Ladislaus the cry *Popolo! Libertà!* was raised, and the Neapolitan troops and officials were driven out. Only over S. Angelo still floated, for a time, the Angevin ensign. Joanna sent Sforza to recover the city, but he was repelled. Then there was a rising in favour of the Papacy, but John XXIII had been summoned to Constanza, where after dramatic protest he was deposed, and the new Pope, Martin V, although a Roman Colonna, did not venture to approach Rome, which was in a state of great turbulence and was for a time completely in the power of the *condottiere* Braccio, who ruled as its Signor until Sforza and Joanna's troops once more mastered the city.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

Joanna I, was a weak as well as a bad character. She was the widow, aged 44 years, of an Austrian noble, since whose decease she had become notorious at Naples as a *vedova allegra* of many lovers. The chief of these, the youth Pandolfo d'Alopo, a former cup-bearer of her brother's, was now made Grand Chamberlain and became so powerful as even to cause to be imprisoned in a loathsome dungeon the Grand Constable of the Realm, Attendolo Sforza, being jealous of the influence that this veteran *condottiere*, now a man of 40, exercised on his middle-aged royal mistress. But Pandolfo's jealousy did not deter Joanna from adopting a spouse for dynastic reasons. She wedded a scion of the French royal family, Jacques de Bourbon, and he, although never formally granted the royal title,<sup>1</sup> soon proved himself master, and after causing Pandolfo to be arrested, tortured, and executed, and having thrown Sforza again into prison, confined the Queen so closely in the Castel Capuano<sup>2</sup> that for months she was not seen and the people began to believe that she was dead. Then she was visited, it is said, by one of the most powerful of the nobles, Julius Caesar, the Count of Capua, who won her approval of a plan by which he should gain access to the royal chambers in the disguise of a porter and should assassinate the 'King' in his sleep and throw his head out into the street to excite a popular rising. But Joanna's courage was not screwed to the sticking point. She disclosed the plot to Jacques, and Julius Caesar had his head chopped off.

Her loyalty, or weakness, seems to have mitigated the severity of her confinement so far as to allow her, not long afterwards, to drive out to the villa of some Florentine acquaintance. A great crowd gathered to see her pass, and her pale, tear-worn face is said to have excited such compassion that

<sup>1</sup> He was legally only Duke of Taranto. His soldiers, says Machiavelli, and certain nobles—notably the Count of Capua—took to addressing him as King, and chroniclers (including Costanzo and Pagano) call him 'the King.'

<sup>2</sup> The Castel S. Elmo, the Castel del Salvatore (since 1352 called 'dell'Ovo,' because built by Virgil on an enchanted egg!), the Castel Nuovo (on the inner harbour), and the Castel Capuano (near the Capuan Gate), are well known to visitors to Naples.



## NAPLES (1400-1500)

a number of nobles were induced to attempt a rescue. As she was mounting her coach they made a sudden dash, and having carried her off they installed her in the Castel Capuano, expelling Jacques, who retired to the Castel dell' Ovo and was compelled to renounce his usurped authority.

Then the Queen once more resumes her shameless libertinism. Her new favourite is a middle-aged, handsome, and clever noble, Gianni Caracciolo, whom she makes her Grand Seneschal, having got rid of the troublesome influence of the honest and soldierly Attendolo Sforza by sending him as envoy to the Council of Constanz. Caracciolo soon begins to lord it. He brings the hostility of the Queen and her consort to a climax by persuading her to demand—during a banquet at Castelcapuano—the immediate expulsion of all French officials. 'King' Jacques indignantly rejects the request, and rising from table withdraws in anger to his chamber, where he is forthwith strictly imprisoned, while in the same castle the paramour of the Queen impudently assumes the regal authority that her husband had been compelled to renounce.

Caracciolo retained his hold on Joanna for 15 years. During this period the contempt and detestation with which the Neapolitans regarded their queen were even more intensified by her evil life and passionate wilfulness—qualities that occasioned a series of sensational events which for the 'scientific historian' are important only as political occurrences that led to the transference of the Neapolitan kingship from the Angevin to the Aragónese dynasty, but which for most of us would be as full of human interest as the story of the ill-fated Queen of Scots if they could find their 'sacred bard.' Here they must be briefly and dryly recounted.

The state of things caused by the shameless conduct of the Queen and the arrogance of Caracciolo, who wedded his daughters to powerful nobles and assumed the airs of a king, so disgusted Sforza that he left by stealth, and putting himself at the head of disaffected barons (of whom there was in the Regno always an abundant supply) he attacked Naples and succeeded in driving Caracciolo into exile. But after the with-

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

drawal of the *condottiere* and his troops the Queen's paramour soon found his way back and re-established his power, being aided by the flight of 'King' Jacques, who in 1419 managed, or was perhaps allowed, to escape from the Castel Capuano and board a Genoese vessel, on which he reached Taranto, whence he made his way back to France.<sup>1</sup>

Sforza now joined forces with the newly elected Pope Martin, whom he had doubtless seen crowned with great magnificence amidst the exultation of Christendom in the cathedral of Constanx, but who was still unable to assume his tiara in Rome, seeing that the city was held by Joanna's troops under the command of Sforza's great rival, Braccio. The Pope and his new ally sent word to the young French-Angevin pretender, who called himself Louis III of Naples, inviting him to come to Italy and make good his claim on the Regno. As a counter move Joanna, on the advice of Caracciolo, sent envoys to Alfonso V, King of Aragon and Sicily<sup>2</sup>—at that moment warring in Sardinia—to inform him that she would adopt him as her son and heir if he came over and helped her against Sforza and the Pope. This offer Alfonso accepts. He sends to Naples a powerful fleet, and in 1421 he himself arrives and is installed in the Castel Nuovo, the usual residence of the 'Dukes of Calabria' (as Crown Princes). But Alfonso is masterful, and Joanna is petulant and capricious. Caracciolo, moreover, becomes jealous and suspicious, for the King is a handsome and soldierly personage, and is constantly in the Queen's company at Castellamare and Gaeta, whither they had withdrawn because of an outbreak of the plague. Ere long rupture takes place. Joanna, yielding to the ill-humour of her lover, suddenly leaves Alfonso (while he is out hunting) and returns to Naples, and the King, resenting such treatment,<sup>3</sup> collects his

<sup>1</sup> It is said that he turned hermit. He died in 1438.

<sup>2</sup> See Table II (b). The marriage (1390) of the heiress of the enfeebled Sicilian-Aragonese dynasty to the heir of the Spanish-Aragonese crown had brought Sicily under the kings of Aragon (in Spain).

<sup>3</sup> Things were brought to a point, it seems, by a carnival *giostira* in which Alfonso's elephant, carrying a group of angels, was attacked by two cars of Caracciolo's 'gentlemen' disguised as devils and armed with fireworks.

## NAPLES (1400-1500)

Catalans—his Spanish soldiery—and after arresting Caracciolo besieges the Queen in her Castel Capuano. In her alarm she sends messages to Sforza, who is at Benevento. He promptly comes to her succour and routs the Catalans, and when Alfonso in his turn summons Braccio and his mercenaries as well as a Spanish fleet, he removes Joanna to Nola and thence to Aversa;<sup>1</sup> whereupon Alfonso's Catalans plunder Naples and burn down a considerable part of the city, and the Castel Capuano surrenders.

But at this crisis, when Alfonso had made himself apparently master of Naples and was rapidly establishing his supremacy by the conquest of Ischia and other important regions, he suddenly left his brother, Don Pedro, in command of his troops in Italy, and sailed for Spain, where troubles had arisen, on his homeward voyage taking and sacking Marseille, which belonged to his rival, namely the young Louis III of Anjou and Provence, whom Joanna had now proclaimed her son and heir.

Thus takes place another kaleidoscopic change. Joanna, Pope Martin, and Sforza are now allied in favour of Louis and against the troops and the supporters of Alfonso in South Italy, while Braccio, formerly engaged by Joanna against Louis and Sforza, remains true to the cause of Alfonso and his brother, Don Pedro, and lays siege to Aquila. To relieve this city Joanna from Aversa sends Sforza—but he perishes (1424) by drowning. He is, however, succeeded by his famous son, Francesco Sforza, who routs and causes the death of Braccio, as will be fully related in the chapter on Milan. Then, aided by a strong armada sent by Filippo Maria of Milan (now also lord of Genoa), Joanna and Francesco Sforza assaulted Pedro and his Catalans in Naples. The gates were opened to them by one of Pedro's captains, Caldora—afterwards a notable captain of Joanna's—who, indignant at not receiving his pay, had traitorously hatched a plot with Neapolitans indignant at the plundering and burning of

<sup>1</sup> Celebrated as the first stronghold of the Normans in Southern Italy. See *Medieval Italy*, pp. 352, 401.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

their city. All the Neapolitan castles were quickly captured by the Queen and her heir, Louis, except the Castelnuovo, over which for years was still to float the banner of Aragon.<sup>1</sup>

Joanna and Caracciolo thus find themselves once more supreme in Naples, while the young Louis, now dubbed with Alfonso's late title as 'Duke of Calabria'—although Calabria is still in the power of the Aragonese—enacts the humiliating rôle of heir-apparent to a throne occupied by a weak and vicious woman, who unable to free herself from the fascination of a masterful and arrogant paramour lavishes on him every honour that he asks for—even the lordships and dukedoms of many important cities. But the catastrophe, long deferred, comes suddenly. Joanna was no longer young—indeed she was over 60 years of age—and Caracciolo's conduct was now actuated solely by ambition. Finally he demanded the princedom of Salerno; but his demand was refused, for Joanna's mutable mind had been worked upon by the appeals of her cousin, the Duchess of Sessa, and by the disdain of Louis, who scornfully asks her how she can allow herself to be publicly branded as the 'concubine of a low-bred subject.' When, astounded and infuriated by refusal, Caracciolo violently upbraids and leaves the Queen she bursts into tears; but finally she gives her consent to his arrest and imprisonment. The Duchess, however, fearing Joanna's mutability, plans with various nobles, among whom is an Ottino Caracciolo, his assassination. He is aroused at night by a report that the Queen is seriously ill, and while hurriedly dressing he is suddenly attacked and stabbed to death (1434).

Joanna, of course, denies her complicity and pretends indignation; but the chief accomplice, the Duchess of Sessa, becomes her bosom-friend and supreme at court; and the property of Caracciolo is confiscated on the charge of high treason. Then, though 64 years of age, she once more lightly

<sup>1</sup> Alfonso's warships not long afterwards forced their way into the naval port, on which this castle lies, and having richly provisioned the garrison took Pedro away to Spain. That the Catalans could hold the castle for 13 years (till René took it in 1438) was doubtless due to Caracciolo's jealousy of Louis



## NAPLES (1400-1500)

turns to thoughts of love and to the primrose path of dalliance. But her unholy life is soon to end. Her adopted heir, Louis, who had lately wedded Margaret of Savoy, while on a most ignoble expedition against the too wealthy Prince of Taranto, is struck down at Cosenza by those fatal Calabrian fevers the mention of which arouses memories of the poet Virgil;<sup>1</sup> and about three months later, on February 2, 1435, decrepit in mind and body, she died.

On the death of Louis of Anjou his brother, **René**, Count of Provence, and now Duke of Anjou<sup>2</sup> and titular King of Jerusalem, had been adopted by Joanna, and for seven years *le bon roi*, as he was called, was fairly successful in asserting his claim against Alfonso of Aragon. At first the government at Naples had to be carried on in his name by a council of nine commissioners, for he was unfortunately a prisoner—having been captured and given over to the Duke of Burgundy. But his cause was favoured almost unanimously by the people of the Regno<sup>3</sup> and supported by the powerful Duke of Milan, Filippo Maria Visconti, who sent against Alfonso a strong Genoese fleet (Genoa being then subject to Milan) carrying Angevin and Provençal troops. The Genoese warships en-

<sup>1</sup> *Mantua me genuit; Calabri rapuere*. . . . The Gothic Duomo of Cosenza contains the tomb of this prince; and beneath the waters of the neighbouring river Busento is buried, if we may believe tradition, the Visigoth king Alaric.

<sup>2</sup> The French-Angevin claimants were: (a) Louis I, Duke of Anjou and brother to the French king, Charles V, supported by the Schismatic 'Clement VII' against Urban VI, and adopted by Joanna I against the Hungarian-Angevins, Louis of Hungary and Charles of Durazzo. Then (b) his son, Louis II, the adversary of Ladislaus. Then (c) his son, Louis III, adopted by Joanna II. Then (d) René, who was adopted on the death of his brother in 1435, and was the strenuous adversary of Alfonso until that prince captured Naples in 1442; after which he continued to assert his claim till his son Jean was badly beaten by the Aragonese at Troja (Italy) in 1462. Jean died before his father, René, who was the last male French-Angevin and lived till 1480. The daughter of René, Marguerite, married our Henry VI, and her sister Jolande, Countess of Vaudemont, had a son, the younger René, who came forward as pretender to the Neapolitan crown during the reign of Alfonso I. The old René (Reignier) and his daughter appear in the play *Henry VI*, partly written by Shakespeare.

<sup>3</sup> Alfonso had the favour of the barons—who later gave him so much trouble and were so cruelly extirpated by his successors.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

countered Alfonso's fleet—which had been besieging Gaeta—near the Ponza Islands, off the Circeian promontory. The Aragonese were utterly defeated, being no trained seamen as their adversaries, who were, says a chronicler, 'so used to the *nausea del mare* and the motion of vessels that one single shipman of them could cope with 20 *cavalieri*.' When Alfonso's ship was boarded he surrendered himself as prisoner of the Duke of Milan, and in accordance with the stipulation was conveyed to Milan and handed over to the Visconti. Then a strange thing took place. Filippo Maria was so impressed by the arguments, or the personality, of his captive that he set him at liberty and espoused his cause; and Alfonso, with his gallant brother Pedro, resumes his campaign against Naples. But René, who while still a prisoner in Burgundy had sent to Naples his wife, Isabella of Lorraine, as his representative (*vicaria*), now succeeds in buying his freedom, and in 1438 he himself reaches Naples with a convoy of Genoese galleys—for Genoa, angered at the barren result of the victory of the Ponza Islands, had revolted and thrown off the yoke of Milan.

For the next four years a wearisome war is waged. Naples holds out bravely against Alfonso, and his brother, Don Pedro, is killed by a *colpo di bombarda* from the walls. Also the Castel Nuovo, which (provisioned from the sea) had been held by the Aragonese for the last 13 years, surrenders to the Neapolitans and King René. But fortune again turned in favour of Alfonso, who when challenged at last by René to single combat answered that 'only a fool would risk his life for what he was sure of obtaining otherwise.' And his self-confidence was justified, for in 1442 Naples fell.

The story of its capture reminds one of what happened some nine centuries before,<sup>1</sup> when it was taken by Belisarius. A mason, Anello by name, having escaped from the beleaguered city, shows Alfonso a secret passage by which the underground aqueduct of the Porta Capuana could be entered, and about 40 Aragonese soldiers, having reached and scaled a well within

See *Medieval Italy*, pp. 138, 291.

## NAPLES (1400-1500)

the walls, after a desperate conflict succeed in opening the Porta di S. Sofia, through which Alfonso's troops force their way. René, after making a short stand in Castel Capuano, took refuge on a Genoese galley and sailed for Pisa; thence he reached Florence and thence France. At Florence he received friendly welcome from old Cosimo, and was, as says a chronicler, 'rather inopportunist' (*assai fuor di tempo*) invested as King of Naples by the fugitive Pope, Eugenius IV—a fact that Alfonso generously overlooked when a year later he aided Eugenius to return to Rome.

It was not long before the whole Regno submitted to the Aragonese dynasty, which was to retain its sovereignty, with one short break, for 60 years; but, as we shall see, beneath this nominal submission there lurked dangerous discontent among the common people, oppressed by war-tributes<sup>1</sup> and by a tyrannous nobility, as well as among the nobles themselves; for as feudal lords in their fortified towns, surrounded by large bodies of retainers, these nobles possessed much of the arrogant independence of their forbears, the old Lombard barons. And these facts explain the comparatively backward stage of political and cultural development at which Naples and the Neapolitan realm (as also Sicily) remained. They explain also why it was that the Aragonese monarchs, whose many ties by intermarriage with other Italian rulers drew them into various wars, not being able to look for loyal support from the people or from the nobility, were so easily overthrown both by Charles VIII and by that infamous alliance of France and Spain to which they finally succumbed.

The character of Alfonso has been estimated very diversely. The old Neapolitan chronicler Costanzo (c. 1530) calls him 'a king very famous for his innumerable virtues'—as Petrarca called old King Robert of Naples—and describes him as of a generous and chivalrous nature, well deserving of his title *Il Magnanimo*, a veritable father of his people, with whom he associated fearlessly. According to others he was martial,

<sup>1</sup> Alfonso instituted a standing army, to support which he levied a much-resented tax on hearths (*focatico*).

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

knightly, and proud—a typical Spanish *hidalgo*—but cruel and oppressive towards the common people, whom he ground down by extortions in order to buy the support of the nobles. His enthusiasm for the new classicism, by which he attracted many *eruditi*, such as Valla and Panormita, have excited the smiles of his biographers. We are told that he regarded the birthplace of any Roman author as consecrated ground; that he never travelled without a copy of Caesar or Livy; that he was cured of illness by hearing read aloud a few pages of Quintus Curtius; that Cosimo de' Medici won him over as an ally by sending him a codex of Livy. Behind all this display of learning and so-called refinement his court seems to have been a hotbed of vice—the obscenities of the new Latin writers finding great favour and intensifying the evil. Besides scholars and poets we find sculptors and architects patronized by Alfonso. He had the Neapolitan Duomo rebuilt, after the earthquake of 1456, and also the Castel Nuovo; and the fine triumphal arch (Fig. 23) that forms the entrance to the castle was begun by him to commemorate his entry into Naples in 1442.

So devoted was Alfonso to Italy, both past and present, that he renounced Aragon, Sicily, and Sardinia to his brother John (Juan). His other brother, Pedro, had been killed, it will be remembered, during the siege of Naples. The Neapolitan Regno was therefore left by him to Ferdinand, commonly called Ferrante, a bastard son of his whom he had wedded as a youth to Isabella, one of the wealthy Chiaramonti of Sicily.

**Ferdinand I** (Ferrante) reigned from 1458 up to the fatal year 1494—*il primo degli anni miserabili*, as Guicciardini calls it. Pope Calixtus III refused to recognize him, but he summoned a Parliament at Capua and assumed the crown. Then, encouraged by the support of the Pope and many of the barons of the Regno, René of Anjou effected a landing near the mouth of the Garigliano, and for some years Ferrante had to sustain a desperate struggle. But in 1462 René's son, Jean, was badly beaten at Troja<sup>1</sup> and withdrew from Italy, and Fer-

<sup>1</sup> Refounded on the site of the Greek town Aecae by a Byzantine viceroy in 1017. It lies between Benevento and the Adriatic.



## NAPLES (1400-1500)

rante, who made peace with the Pope (now the gentle Sienese, Pius II) and was crowned by a papal legate at Barletta,<sup>1</sup> wreaked a terrible vengeance on the rebel barons. For the next 20 years they were crushed under his iron tyranny. During this period the vigorous and crafty policy of the King raised the prestige of Naples. In alliance with the iniquitous Pope Sixtus IV, whose plot to murder the two Medici princes had not fully succeeded, he joined in the war against Florence, and enjoyed the triumph of seeing that city humiliated and of receiving Lorenzo as a suppliant in his luxurious palace at Naples. Nor was his good fortune less in disembarassing himself of the Turks, who in 1480 had seized Otranto.<sup>2</sup>

But all this prosperity was founded on sand.<sup>3</sup> About 1485 discontent and hatred, which had ever and again broken out in short-lived rebellions, found embittered and capable leaders in the Prince of Taranto, in Sanseverino, Prince of Salerno, and Coppola, Count of Sarno. The rising was encouraged by the crafty Cibo (Innocent VIII); but he abandoned the rebels when he saw that they were likely to succumb, and it is painful to add that Lorenzo de' Medici joined Innocent in abetting the atrocious conduct of Ferrante and his 'abominable' son, *il feroce giovane* Alfonso, in their attempt to extirpate the insurgent nobility. So deeply indeed did Lorenzo degrade himself that he allowed his daughter Maddalena to marry Franceschetto Cibo, the so-called 'nephew'—really the bastard—of Innocent, who in turn gave a cardinal's hat to Lorenzo's son Giovanni, a boy of 14, afterwards Pope Leo X.

Terrible stories are told of the treachery and pitiless inhumanity with which Ferrante and Alfonso entrapped and murdered their victims. For example, the Count of Sarno's

<sup>1</sup> On the Adriatic, a few miles from the battlefield of Cannae. From Barletta is visible the Castel del Monte of the Emperor Frederick II. See illustration in *Medieval Italy*.

<sup>2</sup> Their departure was mainly due, not to Ferrante's pressure, but to the death of the Sultan, Mohammed II.

<sup>3</sup> See Villari's *Machiavelli*, Introd. ii, 5. Ferdinand seems to have increased his wealth by commerce. 'He bought up goods and forbade his subjects to compete with him, thus securing what prices he wished.'

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

son being betrothed to a relative of Ferrante, a wedding feast was arranged by the King, who during the banquet had the bridegroom with many of his relations and friends arrested; and most of those who were captured by such means are believed to have been put to death amidst tortures, or to have died in loathsome dungeons; some, it is said, were dragged by oxen or mules through the streets before being publicly executed and quartered—the heads being then impaled anigh the city gates. The memory still exists of a church on the Chiaia, now vanished, in which a number of fugitive nobles took sanctuary and were all massacred by Alfonso and his armed retinue; and in dungeon-like apartments of the Castel Nuovo there are still, I believe, coffins to be seen in which lie skeletons of decapitated men, and mouldering corpses, said to be the very same bodies upon which Ferrante and his son used to gaze and sate their greed for vengeance. Some, or perhaps most, of these tales may have been invented by hostile chroniclers, such as Philippe de Commines, who was naturally on the side of the French kings and the Angevins. Guicciardini too, though a friend of Machiavelli, was no friend of Machiavellian princes, and severely condemns Ferrante and Alfonso. But his assertions—which are followed by later writers, such as Giannone—although stated with his usual moderation, may have been influenced by the malicious fabrications of others.

Alfonso's love of learning had induced him to provide his son Ferrante with learned tutors—among whom were the notorious Panormita, his fulsome panegyrist, and the famous Valla, and Alfonso Borgia, afterwards Pope Calixtus III. Ferrante was accordingly highly educated, and we hear of his publishing Latin orations and epistles. He also patronized literary men and engaged 'humanists' to educate his children.<sup>1</sup> The eldest, the ferocious youth Alfonso, hated books and took

<sup>1</sup> *E.g.* his learned secretary, Petrucci (who joined the rebel barons), and the poets and humanists Pontano and Altilio, and the philosophic-physician Angelo Catone. Later at the Neapolitan court we have the Latin and Italian poet Sannazaro, and his friend the blind scholar Poderico, by whose influence (at Somma, on the slopes of Vesuvius, whither they had fled from the plague). Costanzo, about 1527, began his *Storia di Napoli*.

## NAPLES (1400-1500)

to militarism, but Eleonora, who married Duke Ercole of Ferrara and became the mother of Beatrice and Isabella d'Este, was, like her daughters, a highly cultured lady of many accomplishments. Also Frederic, who afterwards came to the throne (the last of the Aragonese-Neapolitan monarchs), was a man admired for his learning and refinement.

Ferrante's consciousness that his throne was unstable, and that both he and his son were hated by the people and the nobility of the Realm, caused him to seek to connect his house by marriage with powerful rulers. In 1464 he secured Ippolita, daughter of Francesco Sforza, as wife for his son Alfonso; later he married, as has been stated, his daughter Eleonora to the Duke of Ferrara, and her sister Beatrice to the King of Hungary; in 1488 the daughter of Alfonso, Isabella, was wedded to her cousin, the young Duke of Milan, Gian Galeazzo.

But these connexions brought troubles rather than strength. When in 1492 Lorenzo the Magnificent was succeeded by Piero the Unfortunate, and Innocent VIII by the nefarious Borgia, the state of equipoise that had existed for a few years was dangerously disturbed, and probably the dolorous Latin letter of Isabella of Milan to her father, Alfonso 'the abominable,' was the immediate cause of the great catastrophe of 1494. Ferrante, who was clear-sighted enough to perceive, as Savonarola perceived, the sword of the Lord impending over the earth, and who sent urgent appeals to Lodovico of Milan and to other Italian rulers entreating them vainly 'not to begin light-heartedly a war that none of them would be able to stay,' became so exercised in mind by the approaching peril and, we may hope, by the consciousness of his many acts of inhumanity, that his strength gave way, and in January 1494, just as the news had arrived that Charles VIII was seriously preparing to cross the Alps and invade the Regno, he died.

The reign of his son, Alfonso II, lasted not quite one year. He was left well supplied with money and troops, but despite his military proclivities and his ferocity he proved an incompetent soldier and a coward, nor did he possess any of

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

his father's diplomatic cleverness. By the time that Charles VIII was at Florence (November 1494) the fleet of Alfonso under the command of his brother Frederic had reached Livorno, to act against the French fleet at Genoa, and his land army, under his son Ferdinand (Ferrante the younger, or 'Ferrantino'), was collected in Romagna. But Charles at the head of his powerful army found no difficulty in parading through Italy 'with wooden spurs and a bit of chalk,' as Pope Alexander remarked,<sup>1</sup> and Ferrantino with his Neapolitan troops was obliged to retire before the invader and to evacuate Rome itself—marching out by the Porta S. Sebastiano (Via Appia) as Charles marched in by the Porta del Popolo (Via Flaminia). Then Pope Alexander, caught in a trap, had to come to terms with Charles, giving him hostages<sup>2</sup> and craftily professing friendship. Thereupon (January 1495) King Alfonso II at Naples abdicates—doubtless fearing a general rising of his own subjects, by whom he was so hated. Ferrantino, a good-natured and popular youth of about 24 years, rides through the city and is hailed by the people as King Ferdinand II, while his father, 'not yielding,' says Guicciardini, 'to the entreaties of his stepmother to wait two or three days, till his reign should have fulfilled its cycle of *one* year,' fled in great terror, 'as if already cut off by the French, and turning in terror at every sound, as if heaven and earth were conspired against him.' With four galleys full of his treasures he made for Sicily, which was Spanish territory. There he took up his quarters in a monastery, 'associating with the *frati* and doing much penance.' His death, in November 1495, prevented him, it is said, from taking monastic vows.

In spite of his comparative popularity Ferrantino was

<sup>1</sup> For this raid of Charles VIII see also the chapters on Rome, Milan, and Florence, and Fig. 34.

<sup>2</sup> See chapter on Rome, p. 248. In connexion with one of these hostages, Prince Djem, it is interesting to note that both Alfonso and Alexander VI (who were drawn together by their similar natures) had sent envoys to the Sultan of Constantinople entreating the help of the Turks against Charles VIII, whom they described as anxious to add the Ottoman Empire to his dominions after the conquest of Italy.



## NAPLES (1400-1500)

abandoned in a cowardly fashion by his people. His troops, drawn up on the south banks of the Garigliano (Liris), fled to Capua; and Capua, as well as many other strongholds, was betrayed to the French. After making a brave but short stand at Naples, in the Castelnuovo, he addressed his followers in a speech that (says Guicciardini) moved all to tears, liberating them from their oaths of allegiance, and then escaped on a Genoese vessel, with a small escort, to Ischia.<sup>1</sup> On his departure the Neapolitans send the keys of the principal gates to Charles, at Aversa, and he makes a triumphal entry. The Castel dell' Ovo holds out for a time, but when the French begin to bombard from Pizzofalcone it surrenders.

Ferrantino sailed from Ischia to Sicily. Here, having secured the treasures left by his father, he enlisted troops, and with the help of Gonsalvo, the 'Grand Captain' of the Spanish-Sicilian king, Ferdinand the Catholic, passed over to Reggio, where he was well received by the Calabrians. Against the advice of the veteran Gonsalvo he now ventures on a battle, but is severely defeated by the French and very nearly captured. With admirable courage, however, he reconstitutes his army in Sicily and with a strong squadron of vessels sets sail from Messina and appears before Salerno, which town, as well as Amalfi, hoists the Aragonese standard. Then, on July 7, 1495—the day after the battle at Fornovo, where Charles was assailed by the allied Venetians and Milanese on his retreat from Italy—a boat arrived from Naples bringing a message inviting Ferrantino to land near Naples. This he does, with a body of troops, and when the French garrison sallies forth to oppose him the Neapolitans rise, and the city with its three strong castles ere long surrenders to the Aragonese king.

A wearisome campaign followed. At last, in spite of reinforcements from France and Switzerland, the French were expelled by Ferrantino, aided by the Venetians, from the

<sup>1</sup> Chroniclers relate that as he gazed back on the blazing houses and ships (some of them set on fire by his orders) he kept exclaiming (in Latin), *If the Lord keep not the city the watchman waketh but in vain.*

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

whole of the Regno except Gaeta and Taranto, which remained for some years longer in their hands. After his victorious return to Naples, the young King perpetrated a marriage with his aunt—and died soon afterwards, in September 1496. He left no children. His uncle (and brother-in-law) Frederic succeeded him.

The character of Frederic has been already touched upon. By all accounts he was not only intellectual but of a noble and generous nature; and certainly his refusal to accept Caesar Borgia as a suitor for the hand of his daughter (p. 251), and his vigorous appeals to Alexander VI not to ruin Italy<sup>1</sup> are to his credit. He also claims our sympathy as the victim of a most infamous plot; for Louis XII, the successor of Charles VIII on the French throne, after making himself master of Milan and capturing Duke Lodovico, and after having secured the most ignoble support of Florence and of Venice—and, of course, that of the Borgia—determined to prosecute his claim to the Neapolitan crown.<sup>2</sup> But the Spanish king, Ferdinand II ('the Catholic'), was also King of Sicily, and his Grand Captain, Gonsalvo, had very effectively aided Ferrantino to recover his kingdom from the French. It was therefore necessary to discover the sentiments of this Spanish monarch, who, being a relation of the Neapolitan king, might very naturally uphold his cause. Overtures led to the discovery that the *Rex Christianissimus* was quite ready, nay anxious, to join in the attack on his cousin, if only he could share in the spoil. A secret pact was therefore signed at Granada (November 1500) which apportioned the northern half of the Regno to the French king (together with the title of King of Jerusalem), and the dukedom of Apulia and Calabria to Ferdinand of Spain. Each had to conquer his part independently; and Pope Alexander, having proclaimed the deposition of Frederic, undertook to invest the two conspirators with their respective titles.

<sup>1</sup> See the interesting document cited by Villari in his *Machiavelli*, vol. i, p. 537.

<sup>2</sup> The Orléans family had taken up the claim of the extinct Angevins. Their claim to the duchy of Milan came through Valentina Visconti (Table IV).

## NAPLES (1400-1500)

When the French army, commanded by d'Aubigny and accompanied by Caesar Borgia and the fugitive Piero de' Medici, attacked from the north, and a French fleet blockaded the western coast, Frederic, unconscious of the cold-blooded treachery of Spain, solicited the help of Gonsalvo, whom he allowed to garrison the strongholds of Calabria. The whole of the Regno was thus ere long in the power of the two invaders. Capua alone tried for a time to hold out, but in vain. It was taken by assault (July 1501) and treated, says Guicciardini, with 'the most pitiless brutality—the women, even those consecrated to religion, becoming the miserable prey of lust and avarice,<sup>1</sup> many being sold for a very small price and taken to Rome. And it is related that some, less terrified at death than dishonour, cast themselves into wells or into the river Volturno.'

As further resistance seemed hopeless Frederic fled from Naples to Ischia, where many fugitives had collected. Then, refusing to treat with his treacherous kinsman, he surrendered to the French, and was transported to France.<sup>2</sup> He was treated generously by Louis XII, who allowed him the title of Duke of Anjou, and 30,000 ducats yearly. He died at Tours in 1504. His heir—still a mere boy—had been entrusted to the keeping of the Governor of Taranto, but Gonsalvo, by swearing on the Host to give him his freedom, got hold of him and sent him to Spain. In the year 1550 he died, childless. Thus came to an end the Neapolitan-Aragonese dynasty.

The two bandits, Louis XII and Ferdinand the Catholic, soon fell out. At first fortune favoured the French, who penned the Spaniards up in Barletta; but reinforcements arrived from Spain and the French suffered several reverses and were finally (December 1503) routed by Gonsalvo with great slaughter on the Garigliano—on which occasion Piero, the ejected ruler of Florence, was drowned. Thus perished

<sup>1</sup> Caesar Borgia selected 40 to add to his harem.

<sup>2</sup> Guicciardini states that he was for six months allowed to reside unmolested in Ischia, and to go whither he wished except into the Regno. Finally he asked for a safe-conduct from Louis and voluntarily went to France.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

the son of Lorenzo il Magnifico, while still a young man of 32, the last of the continuous rulers of the elder Medici family. He was buried in the abbey church of Monte Cassino, where his tomb may yet be seen.

For the next two centuries (till 1713) the realm of Naples was under Spanish sovranity and Spanish viceroys, of whom Gonsalvo was the first, and can scarcely be regarded as one of the Italian states.



## CHAPTER III

### MILAN (1400-1500)

**I**T has been related already how (in 1402) the crafty and ambitious Gian Galeazzo Visconti, the first Duke of Milan, died suddenly—perhaps of the plague—when apparently on the point of realizing his design of founding a powerful kingdom in North and Central Italy, and how for ten years his son, Giovanni Maria, at first under the tutelage of his mother Caterina (whom he perhaps eventually poisoned), held the dukedom, rivalling in atrocities the worst of his ancestors, till he was assassinated<sup>1</sup> and made place for his brother, who reigned for 35 years (1412-47).

This brother, **Filippo Maria**, now 20 years of age, had been hitherto Count of Pavia, and had been for some time virtually a prisoner in the Pavian Castello; for the powerful *condottiere* Facino Cane had mastered the city and had dominated the situation with his mercenaries. The young Duke was of a gloomy and suspicious nature, and so detested publicity—partly, it is said, because of his repulsively bloated and pallid face—that he scarcely ever left his lair in the Castello di Porta Giovia (later the Castello Sforzesco). But he was exceedingly cunning and versatile in diplomacy, and from his dark retreats controlled so ably his military commanders and his political envoys that ere long the Milanese duchy, which since the death of Gian Galeazzo had been falling rapidly to ruin, was to a large extent re-established. His success was, however, interrupted by his dismissal of the *condottiere*

<sup>1</sup> The church of S. Gottardo, in which he was murdered by three nobles, was the chapel of the old Visconti palace (now reconstructed as the Palazzo Reale, near the Duomo). Its fine Gothic octagonal campanile (of 1330) is well seen from the roof of the Duomo.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

Carmagnola, who had fallen under his suspicions and who, as we shall see later, gave his services to Venice, the great adversary of Milan, and ultimately perished as a traitor to the Venetian Republic.

Soon after his accession, Filippo Maria had married the widow<sup>1</sup> of the *condottiere* Facino Cane—a proceeding possibly due to the necessity of winning over the troops of this powerful mercenary. But this explanation is hardly consistent with the fact that ere long, in an access of furious jealousy, he had her tortured and beheaded, together with a young squire and several court ladies. He then married Marie of Savoy, but he neglected and confined her and lived with a mistress, Agnese del Maino, whose daughter (his only child) was the charming Bianca Maria, later Francesco Sforza's wife—one of the earliest of those attractive and highly accomplished 'ladies of the Renaissance' among whom we shall find pre-eminent the sisters Isabella and Beatrice d'Este.

How it happened that Bianca married the future Duke Sforza was as follows. On his dismissal by Filippo Maria (1422) the *condottiere* Carmagnola, being engaged by the Venetian state, inflicted severe defeats on his former master. Having taken Brescia and routed the ducal troops at Maclodio (1427), he forced the Milanese to cede considerable territory, and in spite of his subsequent failures—which finally led to his execution at Venice as traitor—the war went on in a desultory fashion for about ten years, the Milanese being captained by the famous soldier of fortune Niccolò Piccinino, while the Venetians and their Florentine allies were latterly led by the able and masterful *condottiere* named Francesco Sforza, who had for some years served Milan, but had passed over to Venice. To this *condottiere* Filippo Maria ultimately offered his daughter Bianca in marriage in order to put an end to the wearisome hostilities; and as it came about that this Francesco Sforza founded a new dynasty of Dukes of Milan, it will be interesting to hear his story—some facts of which have already been related in connexion with Joanna of Naples.

<sup>1</sup> A Florentine lady, *née* Beatrice della Tenda.

## MILAN (1400-1500)

### THE RISE OF THE SFORZA

Francesco Sforza's father was Muzio Attendolo of the country town Cotignola in Romagna. There is an old tradition, which we need not doubt, that once when the youth Muzio was cutting wood a troop of mercenaries rode past and invited him to join them. Throwing his axe up among the branches of an oak he exclaimed, 'If it sticks, I'll go'; and as it stuck, he went. The assertion that he was a peasant youth is evidently wrong, for the Attendoli seem to have been leading burghers of their native town, as their spacious, well-built brick *palazzo* still testifies. That a well-to-do burgher's son should be felling trees or cutting firewood is not very astonishing, especially as Muzio was one of 21 children. Moreover, old records show that the home of the Attendoli was often 'full of arms and rough fighting men,' so, however it may have happened, the youth probably needed no great persuasion to join a *Compagnia di ventura*. For about 15 years he served under the great *condottiere* Alberigo da Barbiano, who is said to have dubbed him with the nickname 'Sforza' on account of his impetuosity. One of his comrades and friends—in later wars one of his most redoubtable adversaries—was Braccio. After fighting for various paymasters, Gian Galeazzo among them, 'Sforza' Attendolo entered Florentine service; and in 1401 the future Duke, Francesco, was born at S. Miniato, his mother being a Florentine, Lucia Terzana.<sup>1</sup>

The many wars occasioned at the beginning of the Quattrocento by the evolution of various Italian states and by the troubles connected with the Great Schism gave plenty of employment to soldiers of fortune. The elder Sforza served Ladislaus and Joanna of Naples, and then the French Angevin party against Joanna and her heir, Alfonso of Aragon; then, Joanna having discarded Alfonso, he served her again, and it was in her service that he met his death; for while on an

<sup>1</sup> Given over later by Muzio to one of his captains. The boy Francesco was educated at Ferrara with the children of Niccolò d'Este and then joined his father at Naples.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

expedition for the relief of Aquila, besieged by Braccio, Alfonso's *condottiere*, he was drowned in trying to save a favourite page who had fallen into the river Pescara.

Francesco Sforza was at this time (1424) 23 years of age. He had already won high repute as a soldier, and was at once chosen leader by his father's troops; and ere long he defeats and slays Braccio. Then he entered, as we have already seen, the service of Filippo Maria of Milan and fought for some time against Venice; then changed sides; then ultimately accepted the bribe of the Milanese Duke, who offered him his daughter Bianca in marriage. The betrothal took place when Sigismund visited Milan (1432) to receive the Iron Crown. Bianca was then eight years old; her *fidanzato* was thirty-one.

The elder Sforza, although he had acquired towns and territories and was Papal Vicar of Cotignola, had preferred the life of a soldier of fortune. His son possessed not only the gifts of a great *condottiere*, but also the desire to rule. This desire was now to be gratified, for when, with the complicity of Filippo Maria, he with Piccinino and many mercenaries moved against Pope Eugenius IV (who in 1434 fled from Rome to Florence<sup>1</sup>) he availed himself of the opportunity to master one by one the cities of the March of Ancona, a papal fief, ejecting the petty despots who, really independent, bore the title of Papal Vicars; and ere long Eugenius, though at Florence he had succeeded in reviving the league of Florence and Venice against Milan, was wise enough to accept the *fait accompli* and to invest Francesco Sforza with the titles of Gonfaloniere della Chiesa and Marchese della Marca.<sup>2</sup> He also offered him the post of Captain-General of the league. This Sforza accepted, and soon after (1435) visited Florence, where he contracted a lasting friendship with Cosimo de' Medici; but when the crafty Visconti again tempts him with the prospect of marriage with Bianca he succumbs and makes great preparations in the Marca for the reception

<sup>1</sup> Driven out, says Machiavelli, by the Romans 'because they did not wish to have war.' For Eugenius at Florence, see Chapters I and IV.

<sup>2</sup> Machiavelli calls him generally *Il Conte*. Later he was Count of Pavia.



## MILAN (1400-1500)

of his bride. Once more, however, the wily Milanese viper wriggles out of his promise, and once more Sforza accepts service with the league, and for two years (1439-40) is associated with two famous Venetian commanders, Gattamelata and Gian Francesco Gonzaga,<sup>1</sup> in a campaign (partly naval, with much fighting on Lago di Garda) against the Milanese general, Niccolò Piccinino—a campaign vividly described by Machiavelli (Book V), and regarded as an especially interesting specimen of *condottiere* strategy, notable also for the picturesque incident of war-galleys being transported overland from the Adige to the lake. Then still another twist of the kaleidoscope and we find Sforza *again* on the side of Milan; for the Visconti, suspicious of his own *condottieri*, Piccinino and Dal Verme (the younger), who evidently meant to follow Sforza's example and set themselves up as petty despots, once more made overtures, and this time (1441) the wedding of Francesco with Bianca actually took place—in the church of S. Sigismondo, a mile or so outside the walls of Cremona.<sup>2</sup>

But shortly after the wedding the wretched Filippo Maria turns against his own daughter, and in alliance with Pope Eugenius and the new lord of Naples, King Alfonso of Aragon, endeavours to wrest the March of Ancona from his son-in-law. For some years Sforza, loyally supported by Bianca, fights hard with varying success to defend and consolidate his marquisate. Two remarkable men at this time ruled cities in this region of Italy, namely Sigismondo Malatesta da Rimini (for whom see Index) and Federigo di Montefeltro, that famous *condottiere* who thirty years later became the first Duke of Urbino (see Table X and Fig. 39). Frederic, at first hostile, became Sforza's firm friend, whereas the able and eccentric Sigismund, at first his friend, proved later a bitter foe, joining

<sup>1</sup> This Gonzaga was the first Marquis of Mantua. See Table IX. Gattamelata is known to many through Donatello's fine equestrian statue of him at Padua.

<sup>2</sup> The church was rebuilt by Francesco Sforza. In it there is an altar-piece (of about 1540) containing portraits of the bridal pair. Cremona and Pontremoli (in the Magra valley, between Spezia and Parma) formed Bianca's dowry.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

his adversaries and ultimately, at the head of the papal troops, conquering from him almost every important town of the Ancona March.<sup>1</sup>

Meantime the wily Visconti had been playing his usual double game. While Sforza was successful he pretended to be anxious for reconciliation, and even sent a courteous request that Bianca's baby should receive the Viscontean names 'Galeazzo Maria'—as heir-presumptive to the duchy; but as soon as fortune changed he once more joined Naples and the Papacy in their violent attacks on the Ancona March.

But he overreached himself. He attacked his daughter's dowry towns, Pontremoli and Cremona, and the Venetians resented it. They defeated his troops and advanced up to the gates of Milan. Then he appealed piteously to his dear son-in-law, and strangely enough, to the infinite disgust of Venice, Sforza yields—sells to the Pope his still remaining claims to the March and is on his way to Milan, when he hears that the Visconti is dead.

Just before he died, it is said, the ever inconstant Filippo Maria had exclaimed that he hoped the Milan duchy would now fall to pieces, although a day previously he had designated Alfonso of Naples as his successor. No legal heir existed. Bianca, though her illegitimacy would have proved no obstacle,<sup>2</sup> was debarred as a female by the rescript by which Emperor Wenzel had conferred the ducal title on Gian Galeazzo. There were various claimants besides Alfonso, among them the Duke of Orléans (see Table IV) and the Emperor Frederick III—by 'feudal right'—but Alfonso had the advantage that adherents of his with Aragonese troops were at hand in Milan. These forced their way into the Castello, and the ensign of Aragon

<sup>1</sup> A fine medal by Vettor Pisano, struck to commemorate Sigismund's capture of Roccacontrada, the last stronghold of the Sforza, represents the victor on horseback pointing towards the conquered fortress.

<sup>2</sup> It is very striking how during this age of Italian history illegitimate children (and their mothers) were recognized as ordinary members of a family (a fact mainly due to the example set by the papal court and many of the clergy). Thus we shall find that two illegitimate brothers succeeded to the duchy of Ferrara before the legitimate heir (Ercole I, father of Beatrice d'Este).

## MILAN (1400-1500)

was seen waving on the tower before the Milanese knew for certain of their duke's death.

But Milan was in no mood to accept Alfonso as its despot—nor indeed any despot.<sup>1</sup> Within a few hours the citizens proclaim a republic, and Francesco Sforza's friends hastily send him a message to warn him that 'the Castello <sup>2</sup> is in the hands of the people; its destruction has begun; on the fort is hoisted the ensign of S. Ambrogio.'

### THE AMBROSIAN REPUBLIC

Milan, once the champion of the Lombard communes, had been for nearly 150 years the slave of despots—some of them comparable with the worst of the Roman Emperors. The return of republican liberty was hailed enthusiastically by many of the citizens—especially by the mercantile bodies, and by the new class of classical 'humanists'—but adverse influences were too strong, and after a precarious and agitated existence of about three years the 'Golden Ambrosian Republic,' as it called itself, came to an end amidst the frantic shouts of a populace that welcomed its new master.<sup>3</sup> With a few words I must try to indicate the action of this drama, in which Venice was considerably and Florence was to some extent involved, while Naples stood aside under the pacific

<sup>1</sup> 'There was,' says Corio, the contemporary Milanese chronicler (a ducal chamberlain), 'a wondrous agreement to refuse the lordship of any one man, as if it were a *pessima pestilenza*.'

<sup>2</sup> The Castello di Porta Giovia, built by Galeazzo II. Its partial demolition deprived the Republic of a most useful stronghold. The present huge castle is the reconstruction built by Francesco Sforza and enlarged by Lodovico il Moro, who employed Bramante and Leonardo da Vinci.

<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Ady, in her *Milan under the Sforza*, dwells on the incapacity of the Ambrosian Government, and gives as a specimen the fact that 'instead of providing for the defence of Milan the Republic passed decrees forbidding barbers to shave on saints' days'—though, if they had not quite finished when the saint's day began (at sunset) they were allowed to end the job. Machiavelli (*Discorso*) says that Milan was incapable of recovering liberty because all true democratic spirit had been suffocated by the vast growth of pre-eminent (*straordinari*) nobles, 'without whose complete extermination no republic was possible.' It is interesting to compare the words of an exiled Duke of Milan (namely Prospero) when he is describing to Miranda how his false brother 'trashed for over-topping' too powerful nobles.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

government of Alfonso the Magnanimous, as did also Rome under that of the art-loving and codex-loving Nicholas V, the successor of the restless and meddling Eugenius, who had died six months before Filippo Maria.

The constitution of this ephemeral republic need not delay us. There seems to have been a Podestà, and a Giunta (Board or Signoria) of 24 'Defenders of Liberty,' and in the background an old Council of Nine Hundred, which had continued to exist under the Visconti with its legislative powers completely atrophied. This government claimed to have succeeded to the ducal authority; but several of the chief cities of the duchy refuse allegiance; Pavia and Parma declare themselves independent; Piacenza even invokes aid from Venice, Milan's great adversary. The revenues of the state sink to a quarter of their former amount. New and heavy taxes excite great discontent.

At this crisis the Ambrosian Republic, seemingly oblivious of the fact that Francesco Sforza was the most dangerous and determined claimant of the ducal throne, offered him the post of *condottiere*, in conjunction with the two younger Piccinini and with Colleoni,<sup>1</sup> promising him Brescia, and Verona too, if he could capture it. On the advice of his friend Cosimo de' Medici he accepts this chance, so fatuously bestowed on him, of compassing his own ends, and ere long he accepts also the invitation of the people of Pavia to instal himself as their Count in the castle of the Visconti. He thus gained command of the Ticino, and having a strong flotilla on the Po he succeeded in capturing Piacenza and taking or sinking all the Venetian river-fleet of 70 vessels near Cremona, and finally crushing the Venetian land forces at Caravaggio.

But jealousies, suspicions, and disputes arose, and Sforza went over to the enemy. Then, as so often happened, Venice in her turn played false. Doge Foscari, after making full use of the renegade, treats behind his back with the Ambrosian

<sup>1</sup> Niccolò Piccinino (d. 1444) and his two sons, Francesco and Jacopo, were all famous generals. Bartolomeo Colleoni, later Venetian general, is known to many through the splendid equestrian statue of him at Venice (see Fig. 24).





24. BARTOLOMEO COLLEONI, OR COLLEONE



25. VIRGIN WITH LODOVICO, BEATRICE, AND SAINTS

## MILAN (1400-1500)

Republic and refuses to give him the territory promised as pay for his services. Thereupon Sforza casts loose once more—but this time he joins neither side : he defies both, and although skilfully opposed by Jacopo Piccinini (Francesco having died) and Colleoni, as well as by his old enemy, Sigismondo Malatesta, now Captain-General of the Venetians, he manages to prevent them from relieving Milan, which he closely invests. The city is reduced to extremities by famine and turbulence, and in spite of all the efforts of the republican authorities, who pass a law punishing with death any who should mention the Sforza's name without a curse, a great revulsion of feeling takes place in his favour, while the not unfounded suspicion that Venice, Milan's hereditary foe, is playing a double game and means to seize the duchy for herself excites riots, in the course of which the Venetian ambassador is assassinated.

### DUKE FRANCESCO SFORZA

On February 26, 1450, envoys rode out from Milan to hail Francesco as the successor of Filippo Maria Visconti. He forthwith set out for the city escorted by a large number of his men. These he bade load themselves with bread, and the famished Milanese, who streamed forth to meet him, eagerly seized on the welcome food. So great was the enthusiasm that the crowd, it is said, endeavouring to lift aloft both him and the horse on which he was seated, bore them—or swept them onward—up to the Duomo, through the portal, and right into the midst of the building.

The first four years of the new Duke's reign were disturbed by the hostility of Venice and Alfonso of Naples, but by the Peace of Lodi and the subsequent league of Italian states against the Turks, ratified at Rome under the presidency of Nicholas V early in 1455, Sforza's title was formally confirmed and the boundaries of the Venetian and Milanese dominions were fixed, Bianca's dowry city, Cremona, and its territory up to the Oglio being finally assigned to her ducal spouse. The history of Milan during these centuries is perhaps more than that of any other Italian city a mere chronicle of the atrocities



## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

and the wars of its rulers; and as the next twelve years were unusually tranquil, and as Francesco Sforza, the frank, robust, rough-mannered soldier, proved a fairly just and able ruler—though doubtless as capable of inhumanity as most of his contemporaries—the city for a time enjoyed the good fortune of supplying to its chroniclers very little material.<sup>1</sup>

Of Francesco's six sons by Bianca the eldest was Galeazzo Maria. Of Galeazzo's brothers one was weak-minded, the second became a priest, the third was drowned (1477) while a youth, and the other two, Sforza, Duke of Bari (*d.* 1479), and Lodovico, who succeeded to the dukedom of Bari and ultimately became also Duke of Milan, will ere long occupy our attention.

When Francesco Sforza died, in 1466, Galeazzo Maria was in France fighting against the barons for the French king, Louis XI, to whose sister-in-law, Bona of Savoy,<sup>2</sup> he was betrothed. Bona's brother, Duke Amadeo IX of Savoy, was nominally at war with Milan, so the home-journey was somewhat hazardous, and Galeazzo deemed it prudent to travel disguised as the servant of a merchant. Nevertheless he was tracked and besieged for three days in a church by Piedmontese peasants anxious to get a reward for his capture. However, he was rescued by the Turin nobles, and on his arrival at Milan found that by reason of the wise and prompt measures taken by his mother Bianca (who was much loved by the people) his peaceful succession had been secured, though he himself, on account of his personal character, had hitherto acquired no respect or affection. And once in power he began to display fully the main traits of his

<sup>1</sup> He added Genoa to the duchy and put an end for a time to the virulent discords of that unhappy city. His court set a laudable example of morality and he refused the pomps and glories of ducal state. An evidence of his common sense is his remark to his ministers, who were consulting astrologers (much affected by Filippo Maria), that he 'cared nought for such cranks.' There is a fine contemporary portrait of him on a medal by Sperandio. He is represented in plain plate-armour fastened with a simple leather buckle. A medallion over a door of the Certosa (Pavia) gives a similar portrait.

<sup>2</sup> Proposed *fiancée* of our Edward IV before he fell in love with Elizabeth Woodville.



## MILAN (1400-1500)

character, which were those of about the worst type of sensuous, art-loving, vicious, and heartless Renaissance despot. The chroniclers, one of whom calls him a second Nero, gasp as they try to describe the astounding magnificence and extravagance of his court—the immense trains of officials, of courtiers, of hunters, falconers, musicians and painters, many of them from France or Flanders or other foreign parts; and the pictures that they give of hunting and hawking in the vast ducal preserves, teeming with wild boars and deer and hares and wild-fowl, remind one of the great Renaissance tapestries or frescos where such scenes are represented. Amidst all these displays of wealth and luxury we seem ever to see the young Duke, with his cold, proud, unfeeling face and his splendid fleur-de-lys-embroidered robe—as he is painted from life in the portrait by Pollaiuolo<sup>1</sup>—pointed out by the cowed and trembling citizens as the murderer of his own mother, the good Bianca;<sup>2</sup> for he had not been two years in power before he had resented her interference, and when she left Milan for her own city, Cremona, and died ere she reached it (at Melegnano) her death was generally, though perhaps wrongly, ascribed to poison.

An interesting incident is the visit to Milan of the young Lorenzo de' Medici in order to act as sponsor at the baptism of Galeazzo's infant heir. This happened in 1469, very shortly before old Cosimo's death and Lorenzo's accession to power. Two years later Galeazzo Maria and his consort, Bona, paid a visit to Florence, when the regal magnificence of their retinue and the regal extravagance of their expenditure exercised, if we may believe Machiavelli, a most pernicious influence in corrupting the manners and morals of the Florentines.<sup>3</sup> An

<sup>1</sup> Fig. 27 (c) and List of Illustrations. Galeazzo was perhaps insane. One of his acts was to order some artists to paint a hall in the Pavia Castello with all the portraits of the ducal family in a single night—on pain of death.

<sup>2</sup> The care bestowed on her children and their classical education by Bianca was remarkable. Their father too took great interest in their upbringing. There exists a striking letter addressed by Francesco to his son Galeazzo, giving him very wise advice on 'living well.'

<sup>3</sup> One of the worst scandals connected with this visit was, according to Machiavelli (vii, 28), that the Milanese retinue 'without any regard for the

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

impressive event connected with this visit was a mystery-play representing the descent of the Holy Spirit. It was performed in the old Romanesque church of S. Spirito (Machiavelli calls it *il tempio*) and ended in a great conflagration caused by the 'tongues of fire.' The church was burnt to the ground. Luckily the *new* S. Spirito, designed by Brunelleschi, which was standing half built close by, escaped.

During the reign of Galeazzo Maria Milan's commercial prosperity was great. Riches and luxury increased amazingly. The beautiful Loggetta of the graceful Corte Ducale in the Castello gives evidence of his taste in Renaissance architecture. The great period of Milanese painting was yet to come in the reign of Lodovico, but many painters, some of them (as Foppa and Cristoforo de Predis) no mean artists, were liberally employed by him. He moreover took an interest in matters of practical import, such as the introduction of rice and of the mulberry-tree and the silk industry; and his patronage of printing enabled Milan to be the first of Italian cities to publish a printed Greek book.

However much all this may have compensated in public opinion for his contemptible personal character and his many acts of tyranny and inhumanity, it did not save him from private vengeance. Furious at the dishonour of his sister by the Duke, a certain Carlo Visconti joined with two young republican zealots, Olgiati and Lampognano. The enthusiasm of these three youths had been fired by the declamations of a teacher of Latin, Cola Montano, who was wont to tell them of the glorious tyrannicides of yore.<sup>1</sup> At Christmas 1476, on

Church or God, all fed on flesh, though it was Lent, a thing never before beheld in our city.' Possibly, I think, this may have been due to the fact that S. Ambrose allows the Milanese three days' dispensation. The Milanese Lent begins on the Saturday.

<sup>1</sup> The story of Galeazzo's murder is told by Machiavelli (vii, 33) and by Corio, who was present, and by an unknown eyewitness. The renaissance of classic learning amidst the prevalence of despots naturally incited the cult of tyrannicides, such as Brutus. Galeazzo's 'carnal vices, scandalous simony, and other innumerable crimes,' are naïvely asserted by the good-natured, rather stupid Bona in a petition to the Pope for the release of the soul of her husband, whom she loved 'next to God,' from purgatorial torment. She

## MILAN (1400-1500)

St. Stephen's Day, Galeazzo with a numerous train of officials and clerics rode from the Castello through the snow-covered streets to hear Mass in the old basilica of S. Stefano (now replaced by an ugly Renaissance church). Having dismounted and crossed the *atrium* of the basilica at the head of his retinue he was attacked by the conspirators just as he was entering the building, and Corio himself saw them 'bury their daggers in the gaudy body of the Duke' and heard him cry out, *O nostra Donna!* As in the case of Julius Caesar, the tyrannicides had reckoned on a general rising in their favour; but Lampognano having been killed on the spot by a Moorish attendant of the Duke, his body was dragged through the streets amidst the exultation of the mob, and his accomplices were caught and put to death with tortures. Thus Milan once more proved itself, as Machiavelli says, 'incapable of recovering liberty.'

### LODOVICO IL MORO

The story of Milan during the last quarter of the Quattrocento—the 24 years that elapsed between the assassination of Galeazzo Maria and the capture of Lodovico il Moro by the French—is full of dramatic events, some of which proved momentous and disastrous for Italy. This period is also of great interest and importance in regard to art; for although Milan did not itself produce any first-class genius, except perhaps 'Il Gobbo'—the sculptor and architect, Cristoforo Solari—it provided for many years a home to two supreme masters, Leonardo da Vinci and Bramante of Urbino, and it is to the liberal and wise patronage of art by Lodovico and his girl-wife, Beatrice d'Este, that we owe some of the finest monuments of Lombard architecture and painting.<sup>1</sup> Moreover,

herself so far condoned his 'carnal vices' as to put up with the presence of several of his mistresses, and to bring up the daughter of one of them, Caterina Sforza, later celebrated as the brave 'Lady of Forli,' as her own child.

<sup>1</sup> It was during Lodovico's reign that the *Last Supper* (*Cenacolo*) was painted and Bramante built the dome of S. Maria delle Grazie, under which Solari's tomb of Lodovico and Beatrice stood till removed to the Certosa. The Certosa façade was also built in his reign, and the Milanese San Satiro (with its curious painted false choir) and the beautiful exterior of Como Cathedral. The Milan Duomo (founded 1386) was being gradually finished.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

the character of Lodovico himself—which modern research has redeemed from much of the obloquy cast on it by hostile contemporaries<sup>1</sup>—is decidedly interesting, and the personality of Beatrice (who seems to have transformed and refined his character to a wonderful extent) is exceedingly attractive. I shall therefore devote some space to Il Moro and his gentle consort.

As we have seen, the murder of Galeazzo Maria (like that of Giuliano de' Medici at Florence) was followed by no revolution. Amid dumb acquiescence his son Gian Galeazzo, a boy of ten, was proclaimed Duke under the regency of his mother, the dowager Bona of Savoy. This was effected by the energy and adroitness of the old secretary and minister of the late Duke, Cecco Simonetta, who kept a firm hold on the reins of government until the crisis was over. Bona, a handsome, stupid, emotional woman,<sup>2</sup> was enamoured of a low-born Ferrarese youth, Tassino by name—a carver at the ducal table—and began to have differences with Simonetta, to whom she and her little son owed everything.

The late Duke had left several brothers—sons of the great Francesco Sforza. One, Sforza, was made Duke of Bari; another, Ascanio, became Archbishop (of Pavia and then of

<sup>1</sup> 'Born for the ruin of Italy' is the verdict of almost every 16th-century chronicler, says Mrs. Ady in her *Beatrice d'Este*. She attributes many calumnies to the hatred of French and Venetian writers. Certainly Corio, who had every opportunity for knowing the truth, seems to distort facts, and Guicciardini (born 1483) accepts Corio's statements too readily. He seems puzzled. He allows that, though 'vain, restless, ambitious, faithless, and self-conceited,' the Duke had many excellent qualities and gifts, and 'would have deserved to be called mild and merciful *se non avesse imbrattata questa laude l'infamia della morte del nipote*.' But it is very unlikely that Lodovico had anything to do with the death of his nephew, especially as at that time he was strongly influenced by Beatrice; indeed he is said by some writers to have had a nervous dread of pain and cruelty. As for his 'morality,' it was that of most Italian men of his age and class. How far the same state of things prevailed among the 'lower classes' it would be interesting to know. A weakness (which he shared with not a few great men—with Wallenstein, for instance) was a belief in astrology. He kept in the Castello a favourite astrologer, Messer Ambrogio, 'without whom,' say the chroniclers, 'nothing was ever undertaken.'

<sup>2</sup> Even Philippe de Commines, the French ambassador, calls her in his *Mémoires* 'une dame de petit sens.'



## MILAN (1400-1500)

Ferrara) and Cardinal ; the third was Lodovico, called Il Moro.<sup>1</sup> The brothers had been granted palaces and revenues by Bona and Simonetta, but plots were hatched, cries of 'Moro !' were heard in the streets of Milan, and finally Sforza, Ascanio, and Lodovico fled and were condemned to perpetual exile. In 1479 Sforza died, and Lodovico was invested by Ferrante of Naples and Pope Sixtus IV with the duchy of Bari. In the same year he was invited by Bona to return secretly from Pisa to Milan, where he was soon associated with her in the regency ; and ere long the poor old Simonetta (over 70 years of age) was imprisoned at Pavia and beheaded—Bona actually signing the warrant for the execution of her great benefactor and writing to her brother-in-law, King Louis XI of France, to say that it was 'an event for public rejoicing.' But she soon discovered that Il Moro had no intention of putting up with her follies and amours. He had the boy-Duke installed—practically imprisoned—in the stronghold of the Milan Castello (the so-called Rocchetta, built by Francesco Sforza) and caused the Council to banish Bona's minion, Tassino ; whereupon she fled to France,<sup>2</sup> and Lodovico found himself sole regent and the real ruler of Milan. Henceforth Gian Galeazzo was merely an ornamental figurehead. Feeble in body and in mind, incapable of rule or any serious business,<sup>3</sup> devoted solely to the pleasures of a luxurious court and well-stocked hunting-parks, 'caring for nothing but dogs and horses'—as of old the boy-Emperor Honorius—he was easily ignored, except when, as a puppet, he was surrounded by pomp and ceremony on public occasions,

<sup>1</sup> Fantastic explanations have been given of this *soprannome*. Possibly meanings were attached to it later, but it was derived merely from the fact that his second name was originally 'Maurus' (after recovery from an illness changed to 'Maria').

<sup>2</sup> Bona had tried to make Tassino's father the governor of the Rocchetta, but failed. She returned to Milan for her son's marriage in 1489 and lived amicably in the Castello till the death of Beatrice, when she went back to France and Savoy. She died in 1506. 'Bona's Tower' still forms a striking feature of the Castello.

<sup>3</sup> But in London (Hertford House) there is a fresco by the contemporary painter Foppa representing G. Galeazzo, when a boy, engrossed in the study of—Cicero !

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

while his uncle was ever more firmly grasping the reins of office and securing his power by giving influential posts to his adherents and gradually introducing his own signature and effigy on documents and coins.

At this time (1480) Lodovico was 29 years of age. He was helped to his success mainly by his own cleverness and perseverance (qualities well intimated by his favourite motto, *Merito et tempore*), but he had also, while an exile, received much aid from Ferrante of Naples and from the Duke of Ferrara, Ercole of Este, whose consort, Leonora, was daughter of King Ferrante. It was therefore natural that now he should seek to ally himself with these ruling houses.<sup>1</sup> Ercole and Leonora had two daughters, Isabella and Beatrice, about seven and five years of age. When Lodovico proposed for Isabella he was told by Duke Ercole that she was already promised to Francesco Gonzaga of Mantua, but that he might have her younger sister, Beatrice. For the last three years Beatrice had been at Naples, whither Leonora had brought her when a child of two on a visit to old King Ferrante; and until the age of ten the little half-Spanish *fiancée* of the Moro remained at the Neapolitan court, for her grandfather refused to part with her.

It was not until 1491 that the marriage, more than once deferred by Lodovico, took place. This decade is a period of great brilliance in the history of Milan. The chief political event was the alliance that Lodovico formed with Florence and Naples in order to defeat the shameful aggression made by Venice and Pope Sixtus IV on Ferrara. It may be remembered that, enraged at the failure of the Pazzi conspiracy in Florence (1478), Pope Sixtus stirred up Naples against Lorenzo the Magnificent, and that Lorenzo visited Naples and made peace with King Ferrante. Sixtus then leagued with Venice, and

<sup>1</sup> His little niece, Gian Galeazzo's infant sister, Anna Sforza, was already betrothed to Alfonso, the brother of Isabella and Beatrice. She was married at the same time as Beatrice and died (1498) very shortly after her, and from a similar cause. Moreover, Gian Galeazzo himself was already long ago betrothed to the Neapolitan Isabella, daughter of Alfonso, Ferrante's son.

## MILAN (1400-1500)

the two accomplices made a disgraceful attack on Ercole of Ferrara ; but the friendship between the four families of the Sforza, the Medici, the Estensi, and the Neapolitan Aragonesi drew them together into a powerful alliance, so that Venice was cowed, and the Peace of Bagnolo (1484) resulted in a general truce, which lasted till the fatal year of 1494 and rendered possible the wonderful outburst of material prosperity and of art that distinguished the reigns of Lorenzo the Magnificent and Lodovico il Moro.

To Milan were invited during this period not a few eminent men—scholars, poets, artists, architects, musicians,<sup>1</sup> engineers, and so on—among them, of especial note, Leonardo da Vinci and Bramante, about whom I shall have more to relate in Chapter VII. Lodovico seems to have taken special interest in the development of agriculture, irrigation, and water-carriage. The ancient *navigli* were widened and furnished with locks, and others were constructed—a work in which Leonardo had considerable share—so that Milan was now well provided with canals connecting her with the Ticino and Adda and Po. Education also was fostered, liberal support being granted to the University and to schools. But all this had its dark side. Great discontent was excited by the exaction of forced labour and by the very heavy taxes which supplied the money needed, not only for these works of public utility but for the endless revels and pageants of the ducal court, where, at least before the advent of Beatrice, riotous living and scandalous libertinism prevailed, encouraged doubtless by the example of Lodovico himself ; for his repeated procrastination in regard to his marriage had been due to his infatuation for the charming and intellectual Cecilia Gallerani, whom Beatrice on her arrival found still occupying rooms in the Castello and ‘respected as his lordship’s mistress.’ This state of things the

<sup>1</sup> Leonardo da Vinci first came to Milan, sent thither by Lorenzo de’ Medici, as a skilful player of the lute rather than as a great painter or engineer. Both Lodovico and Beatrice were devoted to music. See Chapter VII, p. 397. The sonneteers and ballad-mongers who thronged the court and extolled the Moro and Beatrice with fulsome flattery were very numerous. One of them (Cammelli di Pistoia) exclaims, ‘In Heaven there is God—on earth the Moro.’

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

young bride very rightly refused to tolerate,<sup>1</sup> and it is something at least to Il Moro's credit that he not only put away his *hetaira* but apparently kept faith—for a time—with his girl-wife, whom he learnt to love devotedly.

Beatrice was only 16 when she became Lodovico's wife and Duchess of Bari.<sup>2</sup> Some two years previously (1489) the marriage of the young Duke Gian Galeazzo with Isabella, cousin of Beatrice and daughter of the Neapolitan Crown Prince, Alfonso, had been celebrated with splendid pageants and tournaments. The gentle, unassuming nature of Beatrice seems to have made it possible for the two girl-cousins to remain for a time on apparently affectionate terms. But the situation was exceedingly awkward, and the return from France of the tactless mother-in-law, Bona, doubtless made things worse; and ere long Galeazzo, with his wife and mother, withdrew to the obscurity of the Castello at Pavia, leaving the Moro and his young consort supreme at Milan.

At last the friction and irritation became so intolerable that Isabella indited a lamentable Latin letter to her father, Prince Alfonso, and her grandfather, King Ferdinand (Ferrante) of Naples, complaining bitterly of the way in which she and her husband were being ignored and eclipsed. And her appeal was not in vain. It helped to stir into action many long-

<sup>1</sup> Cecilia was treated with great respect and admiration, as an 'Aspasia' or 'Sappho,' by many eminent contemporaries. Her portrait was painted by Leonardo da Vinci and her learning and beauty were lauded by poets and scholars. She became the wife of a Count Bergamini. One is somewhat taken aback to find Isabella d'Este writing to her in a familiar way, asking for the loan of the portrait, shortly after the death of Beatrice. But Renaissance feelings on these subjects were not like ours. Beatrice herself was devotedly attached to her husband's illegitimate daughter Bianca (see Frontispiece and Notes to Illustrations). A curious evidence of this state of things is the fact that Beatrice's father, Duke Ercole of Ferrara, sent as a present to his *fiancée*, Leonora of Naples, a picture representing himself with his illegitimate daughter Lucrezia.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Ady (Julia Cartwright) has related fully and in a very attractive and sympathetic way the life of Beatrice and that of her sister, Isabella d'Este. Much light has been thrown on the subject by discoveries at Mantua of the correspondence of Isabella—the 'Lady of the Renaissance' *par excellence*—with many contemporary celebrities. As natural, we have in these biographies much interesting information about wedding pageants and female dress.



## MILAN (1400-1500)

accumulating jealousies, and was one of the first perceptible symptoms of that great landslip which was soon not only to upset the peaceful equipoise of the last ten years, but to overwhelm the Milanese duchy in ruin and to bring unnumbered woes on the whole of Italy.

The fact is that Lodovico's conduct had not of late been reassuring to the Neapolitan king, with whom by the terms of the Peace of Bagnolo he was allied against Venice. Besides old jealousies and suspicions, due to Filippo Maria's legacy of the Milanese dukedom to the Aragonese of Naples and the evident ambition of the Sforza to add the kingdom of Naples to the Milanese dominions, the claim of the extinct French Angevins to the Neapolitan crown had of late been taken up by the Valois French king, Charles VIII, and this half-idiotic prince<sup>1</sup> had been encouraged in his wild ambitions by Innocent VIII. This notorious Pope—Cibo of Genoa, who bought the Papacy in 1484 and died<sup>2</sup> in 1492, some three months after Lorenzo the Magnificent—had instigated a rising of the barons against Ferdinand (Ferrante) of Naples, whom that king and his



CHARLES VIII

*From a contemporary medal*

<sup>1</sup> Guicciardini, in his *Storia d'Italia*, written about 1535, gives an almost Tacitean portrait of Charles: devoid of almost all the gifts of nature and of intellect . . . of aspect most repulsive, so that he seemed more like a monster than a man . . . not only without *le buone arti* but scarcely able to decipher the letters of the alphabet . . . ambitious, stupid, obstinate, etc. Even Ph. de Commynes, though he calls him kind and gentle, allows that he was 'as feeble in mind as in body.' Others tell us of his big nose, hanging underlip, and idiotic expression—such as we see on his medals and in the portrait in the Uffizi-Pitti corridor. Charles was obsessed by the ambition to rival his ancestor Louis IX (Saint Louis) as crusader, and to conquer even the Sultan!

<sup>2</sup> For the horrid circumstances of his death, see Chapter I of this Part.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

ferocious son, Alfonso, had attempted to exterminate with indescribable cruelty. In spite of papal excommunication the tyrants had succeeded in their devilish project, and the Pope accordingly came over to the side of the stronger and left the weak-witted Charles in the lurch.

Then the Moro, alarmed at the hatred and jealousy which his successful assumption of ducal power had aroused, began to cast about for allies. The new Pope, Alexander VI, the crafty and ambitious Spaniard, Rodrigo Borgia, was yearning to see the too powerful Regent of Milan humbled. Venice was in a state of nervous vacillation. So Lodovico negotiated with Charles, promising to support his invasion of the Neapolitan realm, and at the same time he secured the favour of Maximilian I of Germany<sup>1</sup> by giving him in marriage his eldest niece, Bianca Maria—with a dowry of 400,000 ducats (more than half the yearly revenue of England in those days). In the same year (1493) he succeeded in forming a league between Milan and Venice, with Pope Alexander and Maximilian as rather dubiously beneficent neutrals, in support of the expedition of Charles VIII against Naples.

The formation of this league was greatly due to the cleverness and energy of Beatrice—now nearly 18 years of age—who with her mother, Duchess Leonora of Ferrara, visited Venice and, like another Portia, made an eloquent appeal on two occasions to the Signoria in the Doges' Palace, pointing out the favourable position that her husband held in regard to the powerful nations<sup>2</sup> of France and Germany and the great influence that he wielded in Italy by reason of his wealth and his firmly established authority as Milanese Regent.

The vivid accounts given by various eyewitnesses, and

<sup>1</sup> Son of that Frederick III who was the last German 'Holy Roman Emperor' crowned (1452) in Rome. Maximilian bore at present (1493), as Crown Prince, the absurd title 'King of the Romans.' He neglected Bianca, who was evidently stupid and silly, like her mother, Bona. She lived unhappily at Innsbruck, and died there in 1510.

<sup>2</sup> This word, inapplicable to Italy till our days, may by the 14th century be used freely of England and France. Whether it applies, in its true sense, to Germany of our age may be questioned. (Written in 1916.)

## MILAN (1400-1500)

especially by Beatrice herself in her letters to the Moro, are exceedingly interesting to all who know and love Venice. We hear how she and her mother and a great retinue, coming from Ferrara *via* Chioggia and Malamocco, were met by old Doge Barbarigo with a vast fleet of barges and gondolas headed by the *Bucentaur*; we hear of splendid *fêtes* and processions and visits to all the sights of Venice, and we hear, naturally, a great deal of all the magnificent clothes and jewels worn by the ladies.<sup>1</sup>

The year 1494 has now arrived—a year disastrous for the political future of Italy—lamentable also on account of the death of not a few eminent men—in *verità*, as Guicciardini says, *l'anno primo degli anni miserabili*. The first fatal step was taken when Lodovico openly invited Charles to invade Italy and openly claimed to be the true Duke of Milan. His claim was twofold: firstly he argued that he was the firstborn son after his father, Francesco Sforza, became Duke, whereas Galeazzo Maria, who had succeeded to the duchy, was born earlier. Secondly, he asserted that Maximilian, when he married Bianca Sforza, had secretly promised to reinvest him with the lapsed ducal title, originally given by Emperor Wenzel to the Visconti family. By this means he put Gian Galeazzo in the position of a usurper and justified his own acts as legitimate sovereign and plenipotentiary of the Milanese people.

Charles VIII delayed his coming for a while. Meantime Italy was in an agony of suspense and vacillation.<sup>2</sup> Lodovico himself began to repent of his ignoble policy, fearing (not unreasonably) that the French king might take a fancy to

<sup>1</sup> Given fully and charmingly in Mrs. Ady's *Beatrice d'Este*. There is a fine portrait of old Barbarigo by Giov. Bellini in an altar-piece at Murano.

<sup>2</sup> In evident imitation of Iävy (and Virgil), Guicciardini describes the prodigies and omens by which Heaven confirmed the forebodings and predictions of men. 'In Apulia three suns were seen by night in the midst of the heavens surrounded by storm-clouds and horrible thunderings and lightnings. In the territory of Arezzo there were distinctly perceived during many days countless armed warriors moving through the air on immense horses, with terrific noise of trumpets and drums. In many places the sacred images and statues sweated visibly, and many monstrous human beings and other animals were born. . . .'

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

Milan as well as to Naples ; perhaps too, half conscious that he might prove ' born for the ruin of Italy,' he was not unmoved by the fiery declamations of Savonarola predicting the sword of the Lord about to fall upon the earth, and by the less inspired but not less farsighted warning uttered shortly before his death (March 1494) by old King Ferrante, that ' any one could begin a war which none would be able to stay.'

In the summer of 1494 Charles with a finely trained army of 50,000 men and with 36 cannon—an array and an equipment far outrivalling what any Italian state, even in the palmy days of the great *condottieri*, could produce—arrived at Asti, where he was met by Lodovico and by Ercole of Ferrara and other princely persons and envoys. ' Two days afterwards,' says Mrs. Ady, ' Beatrice arrived, bringing her choir of singers and musicians, and accompanied by eighty ladies especially chosen for their beauty and rich attire. . . . Charles advanced, cap in hand, to greet the Duchess and, beginning with Beatrice and Bianca, kissed all the [82 ?] ladies present.' The beauty and vivacity of the young Duchess made a deep impression on the uncouth, half-witted King. As Beatrice herself told her sister Isabella, he spent three hours conversing with her and her ladies, and then begged to be allowed to see her dance.

The reception at Milan was, of course, gorgeous. But we must try to imagine without the help of chroniclers, ancient or modern, the pageants, the banquets, and the hunting parties offered to the astounded northerners, as well as the magnificent dresses and splendid jewels of the rival Duchesses and their retinues. It is more to our present purpose to relate that Isabella, the true Duchess of Milan—if indeed Gian Galeazzo was no usurper—had sworn<sup>1</sup> that she would rather stab herself than meet the mortal foe of her father (now Alfonso II of Naples), but the youthful Duke had become seriously ill—perhaps without the aid of poison—and his proud young wife's spirit was broken. She received Charles at the Castello of Pavia, and is said to have thrown herself weeping at his feet, imploring him to renounce his designs against Naples—an

<sup>1</sup> So says the contemporary Venetian diarist, Sanudo.



## MILAN (1400-1500)

entreaty that the stupid and embarrassed monarch put aside with the excuse that he could not give up what had cost him so much trouble and money.

Charles and Lodovico had reached Piacenza, where the bulk of the French army lay, when news came that Gian Galeazzo was dying. The Moro hastened back, but ere he arrived at Pavia the young Duke had died.<sup>1</sup> He at once summoned a council and, doubtless knowing well what answer he would receive, proposed that Gian Galeazzo's son, a child of four years, should be proclaimed Duke in his father's stead. The suggestion was rejected; 'under which pretext,' says Guicciardini, 'honesty yielding to ambition, although he simulated resistance, he assumed on the following morning the title and the insignia of the Duke of Milan'—an act to which Charles graciously gave his regal sanction.

Many dramatic events connected with this raid of Charles VIII—such as the expulsion from Florence of the cowardly Piero de' Medici and the fall and restoration of the Aragonesi of Naples—will be found narrated in the chapters on Rome, Naples, and Florence. What especially concerns Milan is the fact that, instigated by the crafty Alexander VI, and doubtless also by his own suspicions and fears, Lodovico combined with the Papacy, Venice, the fugitive Neapolitan king (Ferdinand II), Maximilian of Germany, and Ferdinand the Catholic of Spain, with the object of cutting off the retreat of Charles, whose forces had suffered the usual fate of intruders into the realms of Circe and Parthenope and were no longer capable of defying the army of some 25,000 men that the new allies put into the field under the command of Isabella d'Este's husband, the slightly deformed and treacherous but valiant Francesco Gonzaga of Mantua.

<sup>1</sup> Guicciardini asserts that on the occasion of the visit of Charles to the dying Gian Galeazzo at Pavia a royal physician was convinced that the illness was due to poison; and most chroniclers accuse Lodovico of the crime. But there seems no actual evidence of this, and, as Guicciardini says, 'although ambition may have prevailed, the Moro's nature was *mansueta e aborrente dal sangue*.' The fact that Bianca Maria, Empress of Germany and sister to Gian Galeazzo, was later so friendly to the Moro is also evidence in his favour.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

Charles, with his army now reduced to about 10,000, found his retreat blocked near Fornovo, where the Taro descends from the Apennine pass between Spezia and Parma to reach the plain of the Po. The Gonzaga's letter to his wife, Isabella, describes (July 1495) a 'fiercely contested battle' in which the French might have annihilated the allies but 'preferred to retreat over the hills towards Piacenza, leaving much booty behind.'<sup>1</sup> Treachery and collusion on the part of Lodovico have been suspected, and much seems inexplicable. Anyhow, Charles and his army reached Asti and Turin, and ere long at Vercelli negotiations were discussed between the French envoy, Philippe de Commines, and Francesco Gonzaga, who acted under the influence of Lodovico. At these deliberations Beatrice was present, and once more in the rôle of Portia astonished and charmed every one by her diplomatic gifts. Peace was signed. Novara, where the Duke of Orleans had long been besieged, was evacuated by the French and given over to Milan, and Charles recrossed the Alps.<sup>2</sup>

Lodovico had now reached a giddy height of fortune—from which the fall was to be sudden and disastrous. Venice, Naples, and Spain were indignant at him for having signed a separate peace with Charles, and fiercely jealous of his ever-increasing power; but in calm reliance on the favourable horoscopes cast by his astrologers and on his understanding with Charles and his friendship with the Emperor Maximilian (who in 1496 paid him and Beatrice a long visit at the summer palace lately enlarged for them by Bramante) he devoted

<sup>1</sup> Including, says Mrs. Ady, a sword and helmet said to have belonged to Charlemagne, a cross containing one of the sacred thorns and a fragment of the true Cross, a vest of the Virgin, and a limb of St. Denis. Most of these were restored to Charles. Some beautiful embroidered hangings from the royal tent were sent by the Gonzaga to his wife, but he requested her soon afterwards to give them over to her sister Beatrice. Isabella obeyed, but with great reluctance and woeful lamentations. Beatrice at once returned them to Francesco, begging him to send them back to her sister. Nothing could show better the difference between the characters of the two ladies.

<sup>2</sup> Two works of art are closely connected with the battle of Fornovo and the peace of Vercelli, namely Mantegna's *Madonna della Vittoria* (see p. 363.) and the picture by Zenale (?) given in Fig. 25.

## MILAN (1400-1500)

himself to a life of luxurious pleasure and art-patronage, watching Bramante's and Leonardo's work at the Milanese Castello and at his favourite church of S. Maria delle Grazie, where the splendid new choir and dome were rising, and where in the refectory the *Last Supper* was being painted—very slowly. But behind all this the people were being grievously oppressed by exactions, and—although he made great show of sharing all his interests with his *carissima consorte*—he was outrivalling his political duplicity by a still more ignoble infidelity, causing the gentle and loving Beatrice great anguish by his passion for one of her ladies-in-waiting, a certain Lucrezia Crivelli, whom he acknowledged openly as his mistress.<sup>1</sup>

Just as this occurred, in November 1496, another great sorrow fell upon Beatrice, and even the Moro himself was for a time stunned by it. His daughter Bianca, a very dear friend of Beatrice, unexpectedly died.<sup>2</sup> Gloom pervaded the Christmas festivities, for the young Duchess, whose joyous nature had ever shed brightness around her, was almost heart-broken by this double blow of fate, and spent long hours at the tomb of Bianca in S. Maria della Grazie, whence she had not long returned on January 2 (1497) when she was suddenly taken ill, and about midnight, after giving premature birth to a stillborn son, she ceased to live. Thus, suddenly, did all Lodovico's pride and happiness collapse—as did, it is said, in the same night, a large extent of the wall of the ducal park. For nine days, we are told, he sat in a darkened chamber alone, while in S. Maria della Grazie priests intoned incessant Masses for the soul of his dear but deeply wronged Beatrice. Sorrow, dismay, and consternation reigned not only in the Castello, but in all Milan and at Mantua and Ferrara, and in many other parts of Italy—emotions that we can still see reflected vividly in lines of Ariosto.

This blow was swiftly followed by others and by the final

<sup>1</sup> Leonardo was commissioned to paint her portrait. Even after Beatrice's death we find the Moro taking property of hers and bestowing it on Lucrezia and her bastard son.

<sup>2</sup> See Frontispiece and List of Illustrations.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

catastrophe, which was indeed such as to remind one of Solon's advice to 'consider the end.' In the next year (1498) Charles VIII, not twenty years of age, suddenly died—struck by apoplexy when playing bowls, or, as others say, killed by knocking his foolish head against a beam (still shown) in a dark passage of the castle of Amboise. He is succeeded by Louis XII, Duke of Orléans, who through Valentina Visconti claims the dukedom of Milan and the kingdom of Naples as heir of the Angevins. These claims he begins at once to press; whereupon Lodovico appeals to his ally, Venice; but Venice repels him with taunts, accusing him, not unjustly perhaps, of perfidy. Pope Alexander, too, favours the invader, and Maximilian dissembles and procrastinates. One Milanese stronghold after another surrenders to the French; Francesco Gonzaga proves traitor and joins the enemy, and the Moro's trusted general, Galeazzo Sanseverino,<sup>1</sup> perhaps bribed or perhaps duped by a forged order, abandons Alexandria and allows his army to disperse.

Then Lodovico's courage, and his belief in his astrologers, suddenly failed him. Although the Castello was well-nigh impregnable, strongly garrisoned, provisioned, and furnished with—they say—1800 cannon, he determined to flee to Germany, sending ahead his two small sons and an eight-horse wagon of treasure in charge of his cardinal brother, Ascanio, and leaving a trusted officer, Bernardino da Corte, to defend the Milan fortress. Pathetic descriptions are given by Guicciardini and other chroniclers of how Lodovico left Milan. He had left the Castello and had taken farewell of all, and it was believed that he had started on his way to Como, but alighting at the portal of S. Maria delle Grazie he entered the church and spent a long time kneeling at the tombs of Beatrice and Bianca—doubtless stunned and heartbroken and, we may hope, filled with bitter remorse, as he thought of the past. In the evening he returned to the castle, and next morning at break

<sup>1</sup> Widower of Bianca (see Frontispiece). He and three, out of twelve, brothers, notable for their great stature and martial powers, were for years in the service of the Moro.



## MILAN (1400-1500)

of day with a few followers he again set forth, and in time reached Innsbruck, where he was received kindly by his niece, the Empress Bianca Maria, and was comforted by messages promising help from the double-tongued Maximilian.

Meanwhile at Milan the fickle mob hung out their flags and welcomed Louis with shouts of *Francia, Francia!* With the ducal berretta on his head the French king entered the city in triumph,<sup>1</sup> and Moro's trusted official, Da Corte, basely surrendered the Castello—an act that won him the contempt even of the French.

Then Louis returned to France, leaving as his viceroy the old opponent of the Moro, Giacomo Trivulzio, who had shared largely in the spoil of the fallen Duke. The tyrannous rule of this renegade and the rapacity of the French soldiery ere long produce such a revulsion of feeling at Milan that Lodovico at Innsbruck sets about collecting troops,<sup>2</sup> and finally starts southwards from Brixen (January 1500) with about 10,000 Swiss and German mercenaries. The audacious raid was surprisingly successful. Within twelve days he was able to write from Milan to Isabella of Mantua and her ignoble husband to announce his triumphant entry and restoration. Almost all the important cities of the duchy drove out the French and welcomed the Moro back with enthusiasm. The Milanese mob was hysterical in its raptures, and the Castello, after holding out for a week, capitulated. Lodovico then, after bombarding and capturing the castle of Pavia, proceeded to besiege Novara. But meanwhile the French army had hastily returned and formed junction with Trivulzio and his band of malcontents. Lodovico, having taken Novara, was in his turn besieged therein. His Swiss mercenaries, annoyed at not being allowed

<sup>1</sup> In his train was the traitor Francesco Gonzaga of Mantua, the husband of Isabella d'Este. His German (Hohenzollern) blood was beginning to show itself. See later, p. 576. A companion of his on this occasion was the notorious Caesar Borgia (the Pope's son), who 'came to meet Louis bearing the French flag.' Castiglione, still a youth, was present, and we have his vivid description of the event.

<sup>2</sup> He applied, vainly, to our Henry VII and to the Turks. Maximilian, as usual, deluded him with promises.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

to pillage, had become disloyal, and finally—on the pretext that fellow-countrymen of theirs were in the ranks of the enemy—refused to fight and opened the city gates to the French. They offered to let the Duke and his companions escape to Switzerland by assuming the garb of Swiss soldiers, but as they were starting northwards the fugitives were detected, some say by the great stature and the well-known bearing of the Moro, others say by the treachery of a Swiss captain, tempted by a bribe of 30,000 ducats.

Lodovico was taken to France, and after being exhibited to the mob of Lyon was interned at Lys, near Bourges, and later in the château of Loches in Touraine, strictly but not cruelly treated, until, after some eight years of confinement, he attempted to escape, concealing himself in a wagon laden with straw. Having been recaptured by means of bloodhounds he was, perhaps, incarcerated in what is still called the Moro's prison—a dark and dank subterranean dungeon cut out of the solid rock, worse than that which does duty at Ferrara as Tasso's cell. Though here he was, it is said, 'deprived of books and writing materials,' he was able to 'beguile the weary hours of his captivity by painting red and blue devices and mottoes on the walls' (Ady). There are still to be seen, perhaps traced by his hand, a rude portrait of himself in helm and armour and a 'sundial roughly scratched on the stone' opposite the narrow slit which, like Ugolino's *breve pertugio*, alone let in the light of day. Among the numerous mottoes and verses still visible we may decipher a rude French version of those well-known words on remembering in misery the happy past which were written by the imprisoned Boëthius and translated by Dante into exquisite music. The sad existence of Lodovico came to an end in 1508. His burial-place is not known for certain, but perhaps the story is true that the monks of S. Maria delle Grazie succeeded in bringing his body to Milan and entombing it by the side of Beatrice. For Solari's monument, still to be seen in the Certosa of Pavia, see Fig. 26<sup>7</sup> and the List of Illustrations.



26. MONUMENT OF LODOVICO AND BEATRICE



(a) JOHN PALAEOLOGUS



(b) COSIMO IL VECCHIO



(c) GALEAZZO MARIA SFORZA



(d) PIERO 'THE UNFORTUNATE'



## CHAPTER IV

### FLORENCE (1400-1500)

(See Table V)

INNUMERABLE books have been written about Florence of the Quattrocento. Many of these, and perhaps the best, as one might expect with so vast and richly composite a material, are monographs, in which are focused against more or less distinct backgrounds certain famous personalities—such as Lorenzo the Magnificent or Savonarola—or in which the lives and works of Florentine painters, architects, sculptors, and writers are discussed from a critical or a popular standpoint. Very numerous, too, are books on the Renaissance, and many of those which do not limit themselves to theoretics and sentiment naturally give much interesting information in regard to the influence of this movement on Florentine art and thought and manners. Such an immense subject, almost every part of which has been so minutely examined and voluminously described, cannot, of course, be treated as a whole in the space of a few pages unless one adopts that slap-dash and superficial method which in such a case would border on effrontery. I must therefore select just a few facts and personalities, and refer the reader to the general framework afforded by the Historical Outline.

Firstly, then, I shall consider briefly the state of Florence in the early years of the Quattrocento and endeavour to show some of the influences that favoured the rise of the early Medici and some of the qualities that gave permanence to their power until nearly the end of the century. Then, after glancing at the times of old Cosimo and of his son Piero, I shall take Lorenzo as the central figure of the important and interesting period between 1469 and 1492, and Savonarola as that of the

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

subsequent dramatic events. In connexion with Lorenzo we shall have to note the revived enthusiasm for classical studies and some of its results, such as the famous 'Platonic Academy,' and in connexion with Savonarola it will be necessary to retell very briefly some of the occurrences which took place in connexion with the invasion of Charles VIII in that first of all those miserable years—as Guicciardini calls them—which brought on Italy such unnumbered woes.

### THE RISE OF THE MEDICI

The political history of Florence in earlier times often presents itself to the wearied student as a chaos of fortuitous events of which he can perceive neither cause nor object. But one really significant event has now become perceptible. Feudalism has been eliminated. By the passing of the severe *Ordinamenti di Giustizia* in 1293, and still more decidedly by the expulsion of the 'Duke of Athens' in 1343, Florence has shown the tendency of its evolution. It has become, as says Villari, a city of traders, no longer divided between nobles and burghers but between *popolo grasso* and *popolo minuto*—between *Arti maggiori* and *Arti minori*; or, as Machiavelli expresses it, 'the *potenti* being exterminated there remained only *popolo* and *plebe*.' This sounds as if there might have been great hopes of the triumph of democracy; but, like many another republic, in ancient Greece and elsewhere, Florence succumbed to influences which have ever tended to lead back from republican liberty to despotism.<sup>1</sup> The feudal nobility having disappeared from the scene, the populace began to rebel against the new aristocracy of wealth,

<sup>1</sup> In his *Proemio* to his *Ist. Fior.*, Machiavelli, who was many years in the service of the Republic, laments as the bane of republics the inevitable feuds and the inevitable splitting up of a victorious party into rival cliques; and in chap. iv he prefaces his account of the rise of the Medici by extolling, in words that remind one of Virgil, the good fortune of a city in which some wise citizen arises to assuage the conflicts for ever raging between the 'advocates of licence and the advocates of enslavement,' in the midst of which no true liberty can exist. The admiration of Thucydides for Pericles, and for a nominal democracy, like Athens, ruled by the wisest citizen, much resembles the admiration of Machiavelli for the Medici.

## FLORENCE (1400-1500)

until labour triumphed over capital and 'licence,' as Machiavelli calls it, prepared the way for the new 'enslavement'—if so the 'constitutional despotism' of the earlier Medici may be called. And here we may remark in passing that a state which could ultimately allow itself to be dominated by almost absolute hereditary rulers without much apparent change in its republican constitution could not have possessed originally the essentials of a true republic or any conception of liberty other than that attributed to Athens in the age of Pericles, and to Prussia in our days—namely, liberty gained by the enslavement of others. This was indeed the case with all the Italian communes,<sup>1</sup> for, as has been shown before, none of them recognized the fundamental republican principles of political equality and representative government. The right of holding office, or even of voting, was conceded to only a small fraction of the actual inhabitants living within the walls. The people of the extra-mural *contado* had no political rights, though liable to conscription; and the citizens of subject towns had of course still less part in the government. 'To see a man of Pisa or Pistoia in any Council of the Florentine Republic,' says Professor Villari, 'would have been then as it would be to-day if we saw a citizen of Paris or Berlin seated among the deputies of the Italian Parliament.'

Under such conditions it was perhaps not unreasonable to suggest, as Machiavelli did (though for 14 years Secretary of the revived Florentine Commune) that liberty—political, social, artistic, and religious—was more attainable under a monarch, or a 'constitutional despot,' than in 'those ill-governed cities which are administered under the name of a republic.' The historian Guicciardini too, Machiavelli's friend, pointed out to him that to unite Italy under some powerful republic was an idle dream, for no Italian republic would 'concede the benefit of its own liberty to any but its own citizens.' And that this was the conviction of most Italians in that age is evident from

<sup>1</sup> Milan is a striking example. It seems, as Machiavelli says, to have entirely lost the sense of liberty. In Venice republicanism became early an empty name, and we shall see in the next chapter on what false principles she built up her empire.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

the terror with which they regarded the possibility of a United Italy under the supremacy of the Venetian Republic. Far rather would they have fallen under the domination of a Cosimo or Lorenzo, or even of the Visconti or the Sforza<sup>1</sup>—nay, perhaps of a ‘barbarian’ potentate.

Whether, therefore, considering the matter from various standpoints, we should bewail the fate of Florence seems somewhat doubtful. Let us, anyhow, look at a few facts before we pass our verdict, bearing in mind the state of things in Florence in earlier days—the days of Guelfs and Ghibellines, of Neri and Bianchi, and of Ciompi riots—and not forgetting that, whatever we may think of the *modi civili*, the ‘gentle means,’ by which it was won, the favour of the people was the charter by which the earlier Medici attained, and continued to uphold, their supremacy.<sup>2</sup>

The gradual rise of the Medici and their successful rivalry with the Albizzi from the times of the Ciompi riot (1378), when Salvestro was Gonfaloniere and headed the discontented Lesser Guilds, has been already indicated on former occasions. We have heard of Vieri de’ Medici, the rich merchant, who prudently bided his time, although ‘had he been more ambitious

<sup>1</sup> Guicciardini praises Cosimo for helping Sforza to master Milan, thus ‘saving the liberty of all Italy, threatened by the Republic of Venice.’ Machiavelli in his many official letters always regards Venice as the worst enemy of Italian liberty.

<sup>2</sup> Formally the succession and continuance in office of the early Medici were secured by a Committee (*Balia*) which was empowered to re-elect magistrates when their term was over. But as this *Balia* finally consisted entirely of Medicean adherents and was usually co-optative, the thing was a farce; and in 1459 Cosimo perpetrated a *coup d’état* by the creation of a permanent Council of a Hundred composed of his own partisans. The ingenious adaptations of republican institutions to the ends of despotism may be studied in the monographs of Roscoe, Armstrong, von Reumont, Horsburgh, and Young. Before the special pleading of some of these writers in regard to the tyranny or paternal rule of the early Medici, especially of Lorenzo, it may be wise to intrench oneself in such objectivity as that of Villari in his *Machiavelli* and *Savonarola*. The pronouncement of Machiavelli is, naturally enough, very cautious, avoiding the subject of politics and merely dwelling on the strange contrasts in Lorenzo’s personal character, which made him ‘like two different persons combined in one.’ Guicciardini, who had less reason to curb his language, says ‘it would have been impossible for Florence to have a better and more delightful tyrant.’



## FLORENCE (1400-1500)

than good he might have made himself master of the city'; and of Averardo,<sup>1</sup> or 'Bicci,' whose son Giovanni was Gonfaloniere in 1421 but refused the rôle of a demagogue and lived as a simple burgher (as he is represented in his Uffizi portrait) and, having won great popularity by his liberality and his defence of the working classes against capitalist legislation, became the recognized, though unofficial, president of the Republic. In this position he was succeeded by his son Cosimo, whose three direct descendants, especially his grandson, Lorenzo il Magnifico, elevated it to a princely and hereditary dignity.<sup>2</sup>

### COSIMO PATER PATRIAE

The main facts of Cosimo's reign have been given in the Historical Outline. Here I shall fill in a few details to show his character and his relations with art and literature. And firstly we may note that after his return from banishment he seems to have acted generously (perhaps influenced by Pope Eugenius IV, who was now in Florence) towards his adversaries, although some of them had done their best to have him stabbed or poisoned when he was a prisoner in the Palazzo Vecchio. It is sometimes asserted that he had the man executed who as Gonfaloniere helped the Albizzi to banish him; but this seems to be a calumny. Those again who are determined to brand all the Medici as tyrants affirm that it was by Cosimo's orders that a certain Baldaccio d'Anghiari, who loudly supported one of his political rivals (Neri Capponi), was murdered and thrown from a window of the Palazzo. But Machiavelli (vi, 7) insists that this deed was done by the new Gonfaloniere, of his own accord. Thus, on the whole, the weight of evidence seems to justify the admiration of Machiavelli and Guicciardini for the humane character of Cosimo.

<sup>1</sup> On Giovanni's tomb, in the Old Sacristy of S. Lorenzo, he is called the son of Averardo de' Medici. 'Bicci' was evidently a *soprannome* of Averardo. See Machiavelli, iv, 3.

<sup>2</sup> The title *il Magnifico*, though often used to denote Lorenzo's magnificent patronage and his great wealth, was given him as a young man during his father's lifetime. It was a courtesy-title also given to other rulers.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

He had been brought up under artistic influences. His father, Giovanni di Bicci, though a simple, unostentatious burgher, took from early years a keen interest in art, for we have already seen (p. 211) that he was one of the judges whose momentous decision about Ghiberti's bronze door (1403) caused Brunelleschi to leave Florence in disgust and study architecture at Rome. Brunelleschi returned about 1420, and before Cosimo succeeded old Giovanni in 1428 several of the first great Renaissance buildings were rising in Florence, such as the Innocenti hospital and S. Lorenzo; and Donatello, who had years ago made his name as the sculptor of the *St. George* and other fine works, was now occupied with his *David* and much else. Then in the early years of his rule Cosimo engaged as architect Michelozzo, the disciple of Brunelleschi, the latter being very fully occupied in constructing the great dome of the cathedral. Michelozzo designed, and began to erect, for his patron the great palace in Via Larga (now the Riccardi Palace—in Via Cavour), the grandeur of which was one of the reasons why Cosimo was banished as 'dangerous for his wealth and his ambition.' Then, after his return in 1434, the new palace and the cathedral's dome were finished and this building was consecrated anew by Pope Eugenius, and the famous monastery of S. Marco, given over by Cosimo to the Dominicans of Fiesole, was renovated by Michelozzo and adorned by Fra Angelico with frescos which are still one of the chief attractions of Florence for all who love what is tenderly beautiful in art.

The mention of Fra Angelico reminds one of other painters who worked at Florence during the rule of Cosimo, such as Andrea del Castagno, Paolo Uccello, Filippo Lippi, and Angelico's pupil, Benozzo Gozzoli (Masaccio had died in 1428).

The thought of S. Marco, too, reminds one of the private cell which Cosimo had set aside for his own use. In this he spent much of his time in solitary meditation, for he had decidedly a contemplative and religious turn of mind. This is shown likewise by his affectionate intimacy with Fra Angelico and with Antonino, the Prior of S. Marco, later archbishop and saint. It is also shown by the very great sums that he spent

## FLORENCE (1400-1500)

on charities and churches and other religious edifices—one of which was a hostel for pilgrims in Jerusalem. And, lastly, it is shown by some of his sayings and writings. Thus, nearly at the end of his life, in answer to Pope Pius II (the learned Aeneas Silvius), who had condoled with him on the loss of his second and favourite son, Giovanni, he wrote: 'What we call death is really life. That alone is true life which is eternal.'

This religious and contemplative bent of Cosimo's mind, combined with his enthusiasm for classical literature, naturally directed him towards Platonic philosophy, and we shall see later how his employment of scholars such as Landino, his friendship with the famous Poggio, and his generous patronage of the youthful Marsilio Ficino made possible the foundation of that Florentine 'Platonic Academy' which, refounded by his grandson, Lorenzo the Magnificent, became later such a picturesque and interesting institution.

The study of the classics, especially of Greek writers, was eagerly favoured by Cosimo, who at various periods was intimate with such well-known scholars as Bruni, Marsuppini, and Poggio, and after the fall of Constantinople supported at Florence as Greek professor the erudite Agyropulos—a successor to the chair once filled by Boccaccio's and Petrarca's dirty *protégé*, Leontios Pilatos.

Like Petrarca, though not a Greek scholar he was a zealous collector of both Greek and Latin codices. During his exile, on which he was accompanied voluntarily by Donatello and Michelozzo,<sup>1</sup> he had rebuilt and largely improved by his gifts the library of S. Giorgio Maggiore at Venice, and ten years after his return (1444) he acquired, probably on the advice of his friend, Pope Eugenius IV—whose long sojourn in Florence was now just at an end—a great number of valuable manuscripts by paying the debts of the famous collector, Niccoli, who ruined himself by his hobby and died a bankrupt. With 400 of these he founded one of the very first public libraries,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In S. Giorgio Maggiore there is a wooden crucifix by Michelozzo—evidently a relic of his visit to Venice with Cosimo.

<sup>2</sup> The germ of the great library at S. Lorenzo, now containing over 10,000 Greek and Latin manuscripts. The transference took place in 1525. The

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

placing his treasures (says Vasari), in cypress-wood stands in the beautifully proportioned *biblioteca* of the monastery of S. Marco, which his favourite architect, Michelozzo, built and furnished for these purposes. And one of the earliest of his sub-librarians was a poor but learned priest from Sarzana, who later, after the death of Eugenius IV, became the celebrated Pontiff Nicholas V, distinguished especially as refounder of the great Vatican library.

But to return to the 'Platonic Academy'—the idea was due, it is said, to the great impression made on Cosimo by a venerable Greek scholar, Gemisthos Plethon, who came with the Eastern Emperor and the Patriarch of Constantinople to attend that Council which, as we saw in a former chapter, was transferred by Eugenius IV first from Basel to Ferrara and then (1439) from Ferrara to Florence. Originally it consisted of that portion of the Basel Council which took part with Eugenius—the larger portion, mainly German, having refused to be dissolved by him. At this epoch—some quarter of a century before the capture of Constantinople by the Turks—the Emperor was John Palaeologus, belonging to the dynasty which had occupied the throne for about 180 years. He and the Patriarch of the Eastern (Greek) Church came to Florence in order to make the attempt, which had so often failed in earlier days, to reunite Eastern and Western Christendom. Once again, however, the attempt failed. Questions such as the supremacy of Popes or Councils allowed all else scant hearing, and the rival claims of Roman Pontiffs and Eastern Patriarchs proved incompatible with even a formal union of the two Churches. But the presence of a great body of reverend and learned prelates and scholars who denied the supremacy of the Pope doubtless incited modes of thought tending towards Reformation, while the interests aroused by these Eastern guests—by their language, their manners, their apparel—influenced for a time not inconsiderably Florentine

Biblioteca Laurenziana was designed by Michelangelo. It will be remembered that Cosimo won the alliance of Alfonso of Naples by the gift of a codex of Livy.





28. THE JOURNEY OF THE MAGI, BY BENOZZO GOZZOLI



29. GIOVANNI, SON OF COSIMO II, VECCHIO

## FLORENCE (1400-1500)

art (as seen in costumes) and the development of the new learning. Old Plethon published an eloquent and erudite treatise on the Reconciliation of Christianity and Platonism, and this, though it failed to reconcile the Churches, was very possibly what first inspired Cosimo with the idea of his Platonic Academy.

Two most interesting mementos of this Council of 1439 still remain in Florence. On the wall of the east transept of S. Maria Novella—not far from the ‘Ruccellai Madonna’—one may see a fresco portrait and a slab commemorating in Latin verse the death (for he died at Florence during the Council) of Patriarch Joseph—‘*antistes* of the Eastern Church, who came to Italy inflamed with the desire of having one Church and one Faith.’ On the walls of the little chapel in Cosimo’s great palace (Palazzo Medici, now Palazzo Riccardi) there are very wonderfully painted frescos, the work of Benozzo Gozzoli,<sup>1</sup> in which is represented a magnificent ‘Procession of the Magi’—the three Kings of the East being Emperor Palaeologus, a very dignified figure in gorgeous attire seated on a white charger, Patriarch Joseph (on a mule), and the youthful Lorenzo, splendidly mounted, bedizened, and crowned. At the side of the Patriarch rides old Cosimo—the trappings of his charger bearing the three feathers, the seven balls, and the motto *Semper* (see pp. 316, 344). Doubtless many of the faces of the very numerous (over a hundred) attendants are portraits. Amongst these are recognizable Piero and his handsome brother Giovanni, and Marsilio Ficino, and Benozzo Gozzoli himself—who bears his name on his cap—and to his right and left are venerable Orientals, one of whom may be old Plethon.

Cosimo died at Careggi, in the villa—still extant—that he had caused to be built, perhaps by Michelozzo, and which later became so well known as a favourite haunt of the ‘Platonic

<sup>1</sup> Finished evidently about 1463, when Lorenzo was a boy of 14. (In 1439 he was not yet born.) Cosimo’s second son, Giovanni, who appears as a youth in the fresco, probably died, aged 40, before it was finished, and long ere this the last of the Palaeologi had been slain at the capture of Constantinople. See Figs. 27 (a), 28, 29.



## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

Academy,' and as the place in which was enacted the dramatic scene between Savonarola and the dying Lorenzo. Machiavelli (vii, 6) tells us that Cosimo was buried *con pompa grandissima* (though it is often affirmed that by his will this was forbidden) and that his death was mourned by all citizens and all Christian princes. *Nel tempio di S. Lorenzo*, he adds, *fu seppellito, e per pubblico decreto sopra la sepoltura sua PADRE DELLA PATRIA nominato*.

The political history of Florence and its connexion with that of other Italian cities and states during the thirty years of Cosimo's reign (1434-64) has been sufficiently indicated elsewhere. I need here only remind the reader that during much of this period Francesco Foscari was reigning at Venice; that at Milan the last of the Visconti died in 1447 and was succeeded, after a brief republican interval, by the first of the Sforza; that Naples, after the death of Joanna II in 1435, suffered from wars of succession until Alfonso of Aragon established himself on the throne in 1442, and that he was followed by Ferdinand (Ferrante) in 1458; that, lastly, during these thirty years we have four Pontiffs, viz. Eugenius IV (from 1434 to 1443 at Florence), and the art-loving Nicholas V, and the first Borgia, the Spanish adventurer Calixtus III, and the erudite Pius II (Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini).

Piero, Cosimo's son, ruled only five years. Some illness—called 'gout' by the doctors of the day—prevented him from taking much part in public affairs; and doubtless after the death of his younger brother, Giovanni, which cast a deep gloom over all the inmates of the great palace<sup>1</sup> of the Via Larga, the end of old Cosimo's reign, troubled also by high-handed and arrogant acts of his adherents, was rather dismal, in spite of all the things of beauty that were now being produced by Florentine artists. Piero's reign was not only saddened by

<sup>1</sup> 'Too big a house now for so small a family,' as Cosimo used to say sadly. Giovanni evidently eclipsed Piero in attractiveness, but Piero was, although an invalid, accomplished and intellectual. He was used by Cosimo as envoy to Doge Foscari, the Sforza, and Louis XI. From Louis he received the right to use the *fleur-de-lys*, which appears on the topmost *palla* in his coat of arms. See Illustration, p. 344.



## FLORENCE (1400-1500)

ever-increasing bodily pain, but was also troubled by the serious conspiracy of Luca Pitti and the Acciaiuoli and Soderini, whose meetings took place in the huge, still unfinished, Pitti Palace. Their design of capturing Piero while he was at the Careggi villa failed (it is said, through the cleverness of the young Lorenzo), and Piero had the satisfaction of commuting to banishment the verdict of death passed on some of the conspirators and of offering Luca Pitti his friendship; but the ungrateful exiles incited the Venetians to declare war—or allow informal war—in order to ‘liberate Florence from the Medicean tyranny,’ and although Florence showed no wish to be liberated and was aided by Naples and Milan,<sup>1</sup> a wearisome war ensued which did not add to Piero’s happiness. However, the allies were successful, and the failure of the conspiracy strengthened very much the power of the Medici in Florence.

As in the following sketch of Lorenzo numerous facts connected with his father’s later years will have to be related, we will here pause only a moment to recall the simple and beautiful work of Verrocchio—with its porphyry sarcophagus and its short but eloquent epitaph, *Patri patruoque*—that was erected in the Old Sacristy of S. Lorenzo by Lorenzo and Giuliano to the memory of their father and of Giovanni, their uncle.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> When Venice tried to win over the new Milanese Duke, Galeazzo Maria, he answered, ‘If you Venetians knew how you are hated, your hair would stand on end.’ In this war Colleone, now 75 years old (see Fig. 24) was the Venetian *condottiere*, and Frederic of Montefeltro (later Duke of Urbino) commanded the allies. In one of the fights, which lasted half a day, says Machiavelli (vii, xx), nobody was killed; ‘only some horses were wounded and a few prisoners taken.’ This sarcastic description of the battle of Molinella is indignantly attacked by some writers, who assert that several hundred men were killed (Villari, *Mach.* iii, 14).

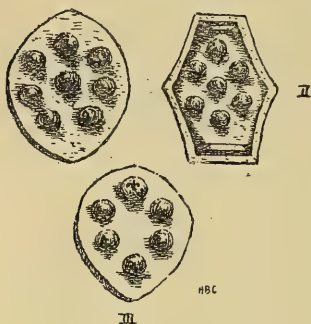
<sup>2</sup> It will be useful to note here how some of the chief artists fit into the reigns of these Medici rulers. At the end of 1469 Ghiberti and Brunelleschi have been dead 15 or 20 years; Fra Angelico about 15; old Donatello about 3; Filippo Lippi has just died, two months before Piero; Michelozzo is 73 years of age; Paolo Uccello about 71; Luca della Robbia 65 (Andrea a young man of 27); Benozzo Gozzoli 50; Alberti 45; Verrocchio, Mino, and Pollaiuolo are about 35 or 40; Botticelli is about 25; Ghirlandaio about 20; Perugino about 18; Francia and Leonardo da Vinci are boys. At Venice the Bellini are men of about 35.

# ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

## LORENZO IL MAGNIFICO (*ruled 1469-92*)

Lorenzo has given us in his *Ricordi* (Memoirs) the date of his birth. 'I find,' he says, 'in the books of my father Piero that I was born on the first of January, 1448.' But the New Year then began on March 25, so we must read 1449.

Some four years later was born his only brother, Giuliano. Their mother, Lucrezia Tornabuoni, was a Florentine lady, of simple and domestic habits, but withal highly educated and a writer of lyrics and stories, which, though of a character very different indeed from the later productions of Lorenzo, may have turned his early attention to literature and the literary possibilities of the vulgar tongue. Lorenzo differed much from the more handsome



'LE PALLE'

(See Notes to Illustrations)

and less intellectual Giuliano. He was, says Valori, one of his associates, fairly tall, broad-shouldered, active, weak-sighted, with 'depressed' nose and without any sense of smell. The many portraits that we possess of him in pictures and medals—among which are the frescos of Benozzo Gozzoli and various celebrated works of Botticelli and the 'truly terrible' painting by Vasari<sup>1</sup>—show him first as a lively and attractive boy, a youth of well-knit frame and not undignified bearing; then, at about forty years, as a large-boned, loosely-built, prematurely aged man with the naturally disagreeable features of his face

<sup>1</sup> So called by Mr. Gardner, who observes that it is as eloquent a sermon against the iniquity of tyranny as any preached by Savonarola. The protruding lower jaw was noticed by Professor Villari when (in 1895) Lorenzo's tomb was opened. In several works, *e.g.* the *Magnificat Madonna*, Botticelli uses, considerably idealized, the type of Lorenzo's boyish face, and that of Giuliano; and in the *Primavera* he introduces Giuliano idealized as Hermes. In the *Adoration of the Magi* he gives actual portraits of Cosimo, Piero, and his two sons. See notes to Figs. 30, 31, 40.



30. THE 'MAGNIFICAT' MADONNA, BY BOTTICELLI





31. THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI. BY BOTTICELLI



## FLORENCE (1400-1500)

strongly—almost repulsively—accentuated. But it is not fair to judge any man from a work of Vasari's brush—or pen.

During the last few years of his father's life the attractive manners and precocious ability and self-assurance of the youthful Lorenzo made him useful as an envoy. He was sent to greet Don Frederic of Naples at Pisa when that prince (afterwards the last of the Aragonese kings of Naples) came, in 1465, to fetch the daughter of the Sforza as the bride of his brother, the 'abominable' Alfonzo. Shortly afterwards Lorenzo went on an embassy to Doge Cristoforo Moro, and in 1466 he was at the court of Paul II, doubtless on some political mission, although matters connected with the Medicean bank at Rome were the ostensible motive of the visit. From Rome he was recalled by the news of Francesco Sforza's death, which event, together with the unwise act of Piero in calling in all the debts due to his banks, led to the unrest that soon resulted in the conspiracy of Luca Pitti and his accomplices and the attempt to assassinate Piero, which was, perhaps, foiled by the sagacity of Lorenzo; for when Piero, who was lying ill at his Careggi villa, had been alarmed by warnings from his friends, the Bentivogli of Bologna, and had determined to be carried in a litter to Florence, Lorenzo, some affirm, rode thither beforehand, and having detected an ambush laid by the conspirators (in a villa lent them by the Florentine archbishop) he sent back word hastily to his father, and thus saved his life.

The 'Colleonic' guerrilla that ensued does not seem to have aroused much ardour in the breast of Lorenzo, though he was in his nineteenth year. He evidently had no military proclivities, and doubtless he had much to do at home as the representative of his father. About this time, too, he began to discover what one of his biographers calls the 'amazing fertility and versatility of his poetic genius'—or perhaps we may say, of his gift for versifying—of which more will be said in a later chapter. As he intimates to us in the *Comento* on his sonnets, his *vita nuova*, like Dante's, was suddenly darkened by the death of some lady of such wondrous grace and beauty 'that all the city of Florence grieved for her.' Who this lady was,

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

if she ever existed, is unknown,<sup>1</sup> but we know (though he has not told us) that she whose beauty consoled his stricken heart was named Lucrezia Donati—most probably the lady whom he chose as the Queen of the Tournament held in February 1469 to celebrate his betrothal with the bride who, as he says in his *Ricordi*, had been given him by his parents, namely Clarice Orsini, a noble Roman lady.<sup>2</sup> This Tournament, known as the *Giostra di Lorenzo*, is minutely described by a contemporary chronicler. It also forms the subject of a poem by Pulci,<sup>3</sup> whose rather pompous and dull catalogue of knights and horses and weapons offers a striking contrast to the exceedingly beautiful *Stanze* in which, some years later, Poliziano sang the *Giostra di Giuliano* and the charms of *la bella Simonetta*.

These tourneys and wedding festivities need not delay us, although they have some interest as a feature of the age and help us to form a conception of Lorenzo's character, being some of the childish amusements (*giuochi puerili*) in which, says Machiavelli, he took such delight.

The marriage took place in June 1469, and shortly afterwards Lorenzo started for Milan to stand sponsor to the infant heir of Galeazzo Maria Sforza—the ill-fated Gian Galeazzo.<sup>4</sup> A few months after his return his father died, and—if we are to believe his *Ricordi*—he 'unwillingly assented' to the entreaty of the chief men of Florence that he should undertake the care

<sup>1</sup> Certainly not, as some surmise, *la bella Simonetta*, who did not die till 1476 (see p. 388), unless the new siren of the *Comento* has nothing to do with Lucrezia Donati, with whom Lorenzo became enamoured as early as 1467. The two *Giostre* are confused by Roscoe and other writers.

<sup>2</sup> *Tolsi donna . . . ovvero mi fu data*. Lorenzo's mother, Lucrezia Tornabuoni, writing to her husband from Rome in 1467, gives a graphic picture of the somewhat staid and plain little maiden (then about 15). She proved a loyal and long-suffering wife to a husband whose *Canti* may well allow us to lend credence to Machiavelli's words, *nelle cose veneree maravigliosamente involto*.

<sup>3</sup> Begun probably by Luca Pulci and finished by his more famous brother, Luigi—who was already writing his *Morgante Maggiore*.

<sup>4</sup> Lorenzo, with his magnificent lavishness, presented such a big and precious diamond that the Duke begged him to be godfather to *all* his future children.

## FLORENCE (1400-1500)

of the city and the State, as his father and grandfather had done. The reason of his assent, he tells us, was that it was necessary—as indeed was strongly urged by the head of the Soderini (whose brother had been a ringleader in the Pitti conspiracy) at a meeting of 600 of the leading citizens—to have some permanent Head of the State who should be above all party influences.<sup>1</sup> And in order effectually to secure this more than Olympian impartiality Lorenzo very soon managed to deprive the old Assemblies of their rights and to found something very like a despotism on a Council of a Hundred—all his adherents—and on a large, packed, quinquennially self-renewing, electoral Committee (*Balia*).

The powers which the self-constituted representatives of the commune had conferred on Lorenzo, although practically those of a hereditary despot, were nominally those of a president of the Republic whose permanence in office was dependent on the will of the people, and that the people willed to have such a ruler and felt no craving for true republican liberty is evident, as we have seen, from the self-contented response given by Florence to the appeal sent from Venice by the exiles after the collapse of the Pitti conspiracy. Scarcely had Lorenzo grasped the reins when an audacious attempt was made by Bernardo Nardi, one of these exiles who had enlisted under Colleone. He and his accomplices succeeded in mastering Prato (not far from Florence), but here too the citizens did not react to the cry of *Popolo, Libertà*, and through their Signoria, 'The Eight,' declared that they 'desired no other liberty than to obey [*servire*] the magistrates who governed Florence'; and the Florentine *Podestà* of Prato (the same Petrucci who afterwards at Florence acted so promptly in the case of the Pazzi conspirators) showed such admirable presence of mind when Nardi prepared to hang him out of the window of his palace—as he himself later hanged an archbishop—that the *tumulto*, as Machiavelli contemptuously calls it, ended in the capture and

<sup>1</sup> We have already noted Machiavelli's opinion on the blessings conferred by a wise despot (p. 306 n.). Roscoe too regards it as a blessing that the Florentines, now debarred from politics, found full play in art and literature.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

execution of the raider and the confirmation of Lorenzo's power.<sup>1</sup>

From the first decade of Lorenzo's rule, which it is impossible for me to describe in detail, I shall select four episodes—the visit of Galeazzo Maria (1471), the sack of Volterra (1472), the *Giostre di Giuliano* (1475), the Pazzi conspiracy and its consequences (1478–9).

Secure at home, he had strengthened his position by alliance with other states, such as France, Naples, and Milan. Louis XI of France had been a staunch friend of Cosimo and Piero and had intervened when Venice permitted Colleone to assist the Florentine *fuorusciti*; and he now continued to address Lorenzo and Giuliano affectionately as his 'cousins.' Lorenzo had moreover gained the personal friendship of Don Frederic of Naples and had delighted Galeazzo Sforza and his Duchess at Milan by his attractive manners and lavish presents, and now, in 1471, he entertains them in Florence.<sup>2</sup> Their visit has been already sketched in the chapter on Milan. Here I need only recall the facts that Machiavelli ascribes to the magnificence displayed by the Milanese visitors a most corrupting influence on the hitherto simple habits of the Florentines, and that at the performance of a mystery play a fire broke out which destroyed the old 'temple' of S. Spirito—not, of course (though the mistake is often made), the building designed by Brunelleschi, which still exists and is one of the most beautiful of early Renaissance churches. In connexion with this visit of Galeazzo Maria may also be mentioned that two years later (1473) splendid festivities were held in Florence in honour of Leonora of Aragon, daughter of King Ferdinand (Ferrante) of Naples, when she was on her way to Ferrara in order to wed Duke Ercole d'Este. At this time the relations between Lorenzo and the Aragonese-Neapolitan court were apparently very cordial; but ere long we shall find Ferrante aiding the nefarious Pope Sixtus IV in bringing Florence to the verge of ruin.

<sup>1</sup> The episode is most graphically narrated by Machiavelli (*Ist. Fior.* vii 25–27).

<sup>2</sup> See Fig. 27 (c) and Notes to Illustrations.



## FLORENCE (1400-1500)

To what extent, or whether at all, Lorenzo was culpable in regard to the atrocious sack of Volterra (1472) is a question on which there is wide diversity of opinion. Machiavelli's account, which I shall follow, reads as if he were honestly trying to be true to the principle laid down in the dedication of his book to Clement VII, namely 'never to palliate a dishonourable action'; and his impartiality offers a pleasing contrast to the special pleadings of Roscoe and other modern writers.

A rich alum (or alabaster?) mine had been discovered near Volterra and captured by Florentine capitalists. The municipality, seeing what fine profits were being made, became so annoyed at the mine having come into alien hands that it went to law. But it was defeated, and annoyance now developed into open rebellion against the supremacy of Florence. Old Tommaso Soderini, who had from the first loyally supported Lorenzo and Giuliano,<sup>1</sup> advocated conciliation, but youthful Lorenzo, incited by Soderini's rivals and eager to display his judgment and foresight, decided that it was necessary to make an example. He sent his *condottiere*, Frederic of Montefeltro (and Urbino), with 10,000 foot-soldiers and 2000 horsemen; and the *poveri cittadini*, as Machiavelli calls them, abandoned by their troop of a thousand mercenaries, offered no resistance to the entry of the Florentine army. Then, a disturbance having been caused by violence offered to a Volterra magistrate, the soldiers, both the defenders and assailants of the town, began to get restive, and soon, perhaps against orders, perhaps permitted or instigated by their captains, betook themselves during a whole day to sacking the town, 'neither women being spared, nor sacred places'—'the news of which victory,' adds Machiavelli, 'was received at Florence *con grandissima allegrezza*.'

This sack of Volterra, which, according to Roscoe, 'neither Lorenzo's sagacity could foresee, nor his precaution prevent,' and which 'so consternated him that he hurried thither to

<sup>1</sup> The brothers evidently worked together cordially, but Giuliano was not recognized officially as his brother's partner.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

repair and alleviate the sufferings of the people,' is said by almost every older biographer of Lorenzo to have been one of three sins for which on his deathbed he vainly entreated absolution from Savonarola.<sup>1</sup>

Let us now pass on to a pleasanter event, if not a very important—except from the standpoint of the Muses—namely the Joust that in the year 1475 was given in honour of Giuliano, now a young man of about 21. The splendours of this festivity need not be described. It interests us mainly because of the *Stanze per la Giostra*, in which unfinished poem Poliziano intended to extol the prowess of Giuliano and has intimated in an idyll of exquisite classical beauty the charms of the Queen of the Tourney, *la bella Simonetta*. Our interest in Poliziano's poem is moreover intensified by the fact that it seems to have lent inspiration to Botticelli in two of his finest works—the *Primavera* and the *Birth of Venus*.<sup>2</sup> The fair Simonetta, Giuliano's beloved lady, died in April 1476, shortly after the Giostra and before Poliziano could have written many of his *Stanze*, and the poem was doubtless left unfinished on account of Giuliano's assassination in 1478—which tragedy I shall now briefly describe.

The assassination of the odious Galeazzo Maria at Milan the year after this Giostra was doubtless mainly due to that enthusiasm for tyrannicide of which, as I noted in a former chapter, we find so many evidences in the history, the literature, and the art of this period. But surely even the most ardent admirer of Harmodius or Brutus would have hardly attempted to justify the treacherous, sacrilegious, inhuman ferocity that actuated a Vicar of Christ and his bloodthirsty accomplices to plot and perpetrate the murder which was the outcome of what is known as the Pazzi conspiracy.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Machiavelli does not mention any massacre at Volterra. Some assert that Frederic of Montefeltro repressed the excesses of the soldiers with great severity.

<sup>2</sup> See Fig. 40 and Index, and List of Artists under 'Botticelli,' 'Poliziano,' 'Simonetta.' Possibly Poliziano was indebted to Botticelli.

<sup>3</sup> Among numerous contemporary documents are specially valuable the *Confession* of Montesecco, signed by him before his execution, the *De Pactiana*

## FLORENCE (1400-1500)

The plot was hatched at Rome. There had been for a long time dangerous friction between the Medici and their social and financial rivals, the ancient and wealthy family of the Pazzi.<sup>1</sup> In the chapter on the Papacy it has been told how Pope Sixtus IV, finding the Medicean power an obstacle to his designs in regard to Tuscany, lent a ready ear<sup>2</sup> to the suggestions of the Roman banker, Francesco Pazzi, and his own 'nephew,' or bastard, Girolamo Riario, lord of Forli and husband of Caterina Sforza; and how the conspirators used as a tool another of this nefarious brood, the boy-cardinal Raffaele Riario—probably a bastard of Girolamo himself, or of his brother, Cardinal Pietro. This youth, about 17 years of age, was still a student at Lorenzo's newly founded Academy at Pisa. He was ordered by Sixtus (or invited later by the conspirators) to betake himself to Florence, while the Pisan archbishop, Salviati, who had been initiated into the foul design and had been promised the archbishopric of Florence, came to Rome to confer with Sixtus, where a military official of the Vatican, Montesecco, was hired to manage the butcher's work. The chief conspirators, except Sixtus, then foregathered at Florence. Arrangements were made with various *condottieri* to occupy Tuscan towns and support the *coup d'état*, and new accomplices were secured, among whom were Jacopo Pazzi, the head of the family, Poggio, a son of the famous scholar, a fiery youth named Bandini, and two priests, Maffei and Stefano. At first they designed to do the deed in the Villa Medici near Fiesole, whither Lorenzo had invited to a banquet the boy-cardinal, Raffaele, but Giuliano was unwell and did not appear. Raffaele then, perhaps primed, but probably an

*Conjurazione* of Poliziano, who was present at the murder, and Valori's *Life* of Lorenzo. Machiavelli was in 1478 nine years of age, having been born in the year of Lorenzo's accession to power.

<sup>1</sup> Dante has conferred an immortality of infamy on two of the family (*Inf.* xii and xxxii). See also *Medieval Italy*, p. 430. One of the Pazzi (Guglielmo) was married to Lorenzo's sister, Bianca.

<sup>2</sup> In spite of certain expressions in Montesecco's *Confession* which seem to assert that Sixtus declined to sanction murder, and merely wished for a 'change of government,' there seems very little doubt that this was only a formal protest, and that he gave at any rate a tacit consent to the assassination.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

unconscious tool, expressed a wish to see the art treasures of the Medici Palace in Via Larga, and the next morning—Sunday, April 26, 1478—was fixed for the visit, and a banquet was to be given in the evening. But once more Giuliano excused his attendance at the banquet. He, however, promised to meet Lorenzo and Raffaele in the forenoon at High Mass in the Duomo, where the young cardinal was to celebrate.

The conspirators, hearing this, decided to delay no longer, but to slay the brothers during the celebration of Mass; and when the hired assassin, Montesecco, refused to 'add sacrilege to murder' his place was readily taken by the two priests, who at the moment when the young cardinal was elevating the Host (or himself communicating) were to attack Lorenzo, while Francesco Pazzi and Bandini undertook to account for Giuliano. The rest of the party had arrived at the cathedral, and Archbishop Salviati had excused himself at the portal and had hurried off with Jacopo Pazzi to seize the Palazzo Vecchio and thus ensure the success of the plot; but Giuliano had not appeared. Francesco and his brother, Bernardo, therefore hastened to the palace, and soon returned with 'their murdered man,' joking with him and affectionately throwing their arms about him in order (says Machiavelli) to discover whether beneath his raiment he was wearing a cuirass or any such defence. He and his assassins, coming as they did from the Medici Palace<sup>1</sup> in the Via Larga, would naturally enter by the northern side portal—the beautiful Porta della Mandorla—so that those are probably right who tell us that at the fatal moment Giuliano was standing in the north aisle, near the well-known, wondrous picture of Dante, painted not long before—while Lorenzo, surrounded by his friends and assassins, was on the south side of the choir, as indeed is clearly indicated on the medal by Pollaiuolo, struck in memory of the tragedy.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The brothers evidently lived together, and Machiavelli's expression, *le sue case*, may mean Giuliano's apartments in the Medici Palace.

<sup>2</sup> In this cathedral, which has only apse-like transepts, the 'choir' with the high altar occupies the centre of the octagonal space under the great dome. It was at this period surrounded by a wooden screen designed by Ghiberti (shown in the medal). The present marble parapet dates from 1555.



## FLORENCE (1400-1500)

Suddenly Francesco Pazzi plunges his dagger into Giuliano's breast, and Bandini with ferocious savagery flings himself on the wounded man and stabs him to death.<sup>1</sup> Almost at the same moment Lorenzo was assailed by the two priests, but although wounded in the neck he defended himself, and having vaulted over the lower parapet of the wooden choir-screen succeeded in reaching the New (north) Sacristy, the heavy bronze doors of which Poliziano and others quickly closed and bolted from inside.<sup>2</sup>

Indescribable uproar and panic arose in the church and spread rapidly through the city. Lorenzo, escorted by a troop of friends, reached in safety his palace, which was soon surrounded by an immense crowd, and when he showed himself with bandaged neck at one of the windows they acclaimed him frenetically with shouts of *Palle! Palle! Medici!* while an attempt of Jacopo Pazzi to rouse revolt with the old cry of *Popolo! Libertà!* was met with furious showers of stones. Meantime Archbishop Salviati, who with his armed retinue had attempted to seize the Palazzo Vecchio, had been foiled by the courage and ingenuity of the Gonfaloniere, Petrucci—whose admirable presence of mind at the Prato *tumulto* we have already noted—and ere long, says Poliziano, who witnessed the scene, the writhing body of the Pisan prelate, in archiepiscopal robes, and that of Poggio, and that of Francesco Pazzi<sup>3</sup> were dangling by the neck out of the windows, from which were thrown, alive or dead, all those of

<sup>1</sup> 'Filled him with wounds' (Mach.). Chroniclers report nineteen. When the tomb of Giuliano and Lorenzo under Michelangelo's *Madonna* in the *New* Sacristy (S. Lorenzo)—whither the bodies were transferred from the *Old* Sacristy in 1559—was opened in the year 1895, 'very visible traces of wounds in the cranium and on one of the shin-bones were to be seen,' says Professor Villari, who was present.

<sup>2</sup> Bandini made a rush for Lorenzo, but was held at bay a moment by a faithful adherent of the Medici, Nori, whom he slew. (For Nori's tomb by Ant. Rossellini in S. Croce, see p. 421.) The bronze doors had been lately made by Luca della Robbia and Michelozzo. Cardinal Raffaele fled terrified to the Old (south) Sacristy. For his escape see p. 242.

<sup>3</sup> In his fury, while hacking at Giuliano, he had wounded himself badly in the thigh. He had managed to reach the Pazzi Palace, but the mob discovered him and dragged him to the Palazzo Vecchio.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

the Archbishop's retinue who had forced their way with him into the palace and had been cleverly caught (says Machiavelli) by Petrucci in his *cancelleria* by means of a door that 'when closed could not be opened except with a key either from within or without.'

The other accomplices—the two priests, Jacopo and other of the Pazzi, Montesecco, Bandini,<sup>1</sup> and others—stated (under torture?) that Lorenzo used all his influence on the side of mercy; but Machiavelli speaks of 'so many deaths that the public streets were full of human remains,' and impartial writers, such as Villari, tell us that he passed or sanctioned very many sentences of death and of exile, in some cases, it is said, against quite innocent persons. Except Guglielmo, Lorenzo's brother-in-law, all the males of the Pazzi were executed, exiled, or cast into the terrible dungeon (*Il Mastio*) of the huge *Rocca nuova* at Volterra, lately built by the Florentines. Indeed, so intense was the general indignation that an attempt was made to extirpate for ever the name and every memorial of the Pazzi; but it did not succeed, for the family still exists and its name has survived, or has been revived, in many inscriptions and in such important things as the *Carroccio de' Pazzi* (the car of fireworks lit by the dove at the curious and ancient Easter ceremony) and Brunelleschi's beautiful Cappella de' Pazzi (S. Croce); and at the Canto de' Pazzi, on the great Pazzi (Quarantesi) Palace, built also by Brunelleschi, one can still see the family's armorial dolphins, carved by Donatello; and, lastly, S. M. Maddalena de' Pazzi, partly built by Sangallo just one year after the Pazzi conspiracy, has been so named to honour a sainted Pazzi nun of the *secento*. To proclaim and immortalize, on the other hand, the triumph of the Medicean party, the great Botticelli<sup>2</sup> was called upon to degrade his art by painting on the exterior of the Palazzo

<sup>1</sup> Bandini, after hiding in the Campanile, escaped to Constantinople, whence he was sent back in chains as a present to Lorenzo by Mohammed II. Jacopo, the head of the Pazzi, was caught 'while passing the Alps' (Mach.).

<sup>2</sup> Vasari says Andrea del Castagno—but he had died in 1457! Verrocchio designed and some one named Orsini modelled the wax figures, which were erected in various churches.

## FLORENCE (1400-1500)

Vecchio the hanging of Archbishop Salviati and other conspirators, and Verrocchio was asked to design a number of wax figures of Lorenzo (highly praised by Vasari!)—one of them representing him addressing the crowd from the window with a bandage round his wounded neck. A medal, too, was struck—designed by Piero Pollaiuolo—a most quaint and uncouth but historically interesting object, whereon the assassins and their victims are shown *in puris naturalibus*!

Before taking leave of Giuliano it should be noted that shortly after his death the fact was imparted to Lorenzo that his brother had left an illegitimate child. The infant was taken in charge by Lorenzo, and later became the notorious Pope Clement VII, the adversary of Henry VIII of England, the ally of the ill-fated Francis I, and the impotent witness of the sack of Rome in 1527.

A short but disastrous war now ensued. Sixtus IV and his bastard, Count Girolamo Riario, infuriated by failure of the plot and punishment of the conspirators, especially by the shameful fate of Archbishop Salviati, vow vengeance. Florence is laid under Interdict. Rome, Naples, Siena, and Lucca declare war against it. Frederic of Montefeltro (now Duke of Urbino) deserts Lorenzo and joins Sixtus, while Milan and Venice send only a few men, not venturing to face the papal thunderbolts—moreover, Venice was being very hard pressed by the Turks, and in Milan matters were in a critical state between the dowager-Duchess Bona and the ambitious Lodovico. Almost unsupported, therefore, against powerful foes, the Florentines found themselves in a perilous position; but undismayed they defied the Interdict<sup>1</sup> and stood loyally by Lorenzo, refusing flatly to consider his proposal that they should surrender him to the Pope or banish him. But bravery at home did not compensate for incompetence in the field, where Florence no longer depended on her citizens, but almost

<sup>1</sup> The brave manifesto of the Florentine ecclesiastics 'assembled in the cathedral church of Sta Reparata,' as the Duomo was still sometimes called, whereby the Interdict was pronounced null and void, and the Pope, so to speak, excommunicated, has of late been questioned, but for no sufficient reason.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

entirely on the mercenaries of untrustworthy and rival *condottieri*.<sup>1</sup> The quarrels of two of these, Duke Ercole of Ferrara and Frederic Gonzaga of Mantua, led to various reverses, which culminated in a serious defeat inflicted on the Florentine troops near Poggibonsi by Prince Alfonso of Naples.

Lorenzo then—perhaps solely of his own accord after consulting his intimate friends, perhaps on some vague suggestion of King Ferrante—decided to entrust the State for a time to old Tommaso Soderini and to visit Naples—assuredly an adventurous, if not a perilous, undertaking, seeing that Florence and Naples were actually at war. From Pisa he wrote to the Signoria to say that, as the one desire of the enemies of Florence was his destruction (and this *was* the one professed object of Pope Sixtus), he had determined to risk his life for the public weal. The Signoria at once authorized him to act as ambassador and plenipotentiary.

At Naples Lorenzo met a warm welcome from the impressionable citizens and found at least one sincere friend—Prince Frederic; and after three anxious months his attractive personality and able diplomacy succeeded in winning over the King, who, having rejected the Pope's insidious request that the distinguished visitor should be forwarded to Rome, sped his departure with words of affection and acceptable conditions of peace for the Florentines, including a reasonable indemnity and the release of the Pazzi prisoners from the dungeon of Volterra. By this compact Ferrante alienated Pope Sixtus, who forthwith persuaded Venice to join him in his crusade against Lorenzo—for, having wronged him so shamefully, he naturally could not forgive him. But something now happened that saved Lorenzo from further attack. Venice, to save herself from the Turks, had induced them to effect a landing in Southern Italy, and they captured Otranto and massacred its inhabitants. Though this city was in Neapolitan territory, the desecration of the sacred soil of Italy by the dreaded foes of

<sup>1</sup> Machiavelli graphically and disdainfully describes these hired troops of the Florentines by saying that victory often depended on whether or not some horse happened to turn tail.





32. PALLAS AND THE CENTAUR, BY BOTTICELLI



## FLORENCE (1400-1500)

Christianity so alarmed the Pontiff that he accepted a formal apology (involving little more penance than an obliteration of Botticelli's disgusting hanging-scene depicted on the Palazzo Vecchio), and having received the Florentine envoys amidst great pomp and ceremony, enthroned before the closed portal of St. Peter's, he first reproved them *con parole piene di superbia e d'ira* and then graciously removed the Interdict and bade the huge bronzen doors be opened to admit the forgiven penitents.<sup>1</sup>

Shortly after this the Grand Turk, Mohammed II, conqueror of Constantinople, died, and disorders resulting from a disputed succession forced the Turks to abandon Otranto—an event quickly followed by the outbreak once more of troubles fomented by the Pope, who with Venice attacked Ferrara, and died of grief when Venice, repenting of its ignoble undertaking, made peace with Duke Ercole. But a knowledge of these endless squabbles, with all their intricate complexities and kaleidoscopic permutations, can bring us very little profit.<sup>2</sup> I shall therefore reserve my space for matters of more importance, passing over the next decade—until the advent of Savonarola—with only a few words on the subject of art.

During these years the court of Lorenzo il Magnifico was perhaps the most important centre of Italian painting, although Milan, Mantua, Padua, Venice, and Umbria were producing or fostering great artists, and at Rome Pope Sixtus was employing Tuscan painters to adorn with their famous frescos the walls of the Sistine Chapel. Here I shall only mention the

<sup>1</sup> Their *oratore* was the brother of the historian Guicciardini. For these bronzen doors (of Filarete) see Index. Machiavelli states that the conditions first imposed by the Pope were grievous, including the maintenance of 15 galleys against the Turks, but that a Vespucci was sent to protest, and obtained *termini sopportabili*.

<sup>2</sup> Peace prevailed, however, between Ferrante of Naples and Lodovico Sforza, and this was doubtless due to Lorenzo, whom chroniclers justly praise for keeping level the balance of power in Italy. Some facts of this period are: the death of Sixtus IV (1484) and accession of Innocent VIII, favourable to the Medici; Lorenzo abets Ferrante in his atrocities against the barons (1486); he marries his daughter to a son of Innocent (1487); his second son, Giovanni, a boy of 14, is made cardinal by Innocent (1489); Innocent dies and the Borgia, Alexander VI, succeeds, four months after the death of Lorenzo (1492).

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

one painter whom more perhaps than any other we connect with the Quattrocento Medici, namely Botticelli. I have already touched on some of his earlier works. It was soon after the Pazzi conspiracy that the *Adoration of the Magi* was painted, by order of Lorenzo, as a thank-offering (for S. Maria Novella). In this we have portraits of the Medici of three generations, among them the lately murdered Giuliano; and behind him is kneeling a figure that perhaps represents the faithful Francesco Nori, whose death probably saved Lorenzo's life. Another, and a most wonderfully painted picture of Botticelli's, known to all who have visited the royal apartments in the Pitti Palace, is that of *Pallas Athene* [*Minerva*] *Taming a Centaur*—symbolical of Lorenzo's triumph over his foes. The majestic and beautiful goddess is richly decked with olive foliage and robed in a dress decorated with Lorenzo's crest—the three interlaced rings; and in the distance is seen the Bay of Naples with a vessel that has evidently just won the peaceful haven in safety (Fig. 32). This picture was doubtless painted about 1480-1. Soon afterwards we find Botticelli in Rome working at his frescos in the Cappella Sistina; and not long after his return he came under the influence of Savonarola, and henceforth painted, it is said, none but serious subjects.

### SAVONAROLA

During the last decade of the century Savonarola is a prominent, and for some years the chief, character in the story of Florence. He began to attract attention some three years before Lorenzo died, and played a most important part during the short rule of the unfortunate Piero and during the stormy republican period which followed Piero's expulsion; and some two years before the end of the century the shameful scene of his martyrdom took place. It will therefore be convenient to make of him a central figure around which to group whatever persons and events I may attempt to sketch in the next few pages—which make no pretence to offer any continuous biography.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Savonarola's life is known mainly through (a) Padre Burlamacchi, his faithful disciple, who took the Dominican cowl and retired to a convent in



## FLORENCE (1400-1500)

Savonarola's ancestors were citizens of Padua, where the Porta Savonarola still testifies to the gallantry of an Antonio Savonarola who defended the city against Ezzelino. The Reformer's grandfather migrated to Ferrara and became a professor of medicine at the University. To this profession also Girolamo was destined, but he soon renounced it in order better to express his horror and disgust for worldly vanities—feelings said to have been much intensified by the wedding festivities of Duke Ercole of Ferrara and Leonora of Naples. Then came a time of paternal displeasure, of great depression, of verse-writing *de contemptu mundi*, of doubts and hesitation, until, moved by the eloquence of an Augustine preacher at Faenza, he left his home (1475) and entered the Dominican College at Bologna. After six years he returned to Ferrara as a preacher, but experienced the usual fate of a prophet in his own country, and doubtless rejoiced when (1481) on account of war—the infamous attack made on Duke Ercole by Pope Sixtus—he was sent to Florence. Here, however, worldly lusts and vanities were still more rampant than at Ferrara or Bologna, for the successful visit of Lorenzo to Naples and the subsequent peace with Pope Sixtus had occasioned a great outburst of exultation. Foreign foes had been foiled, internal factions hushed, and the Florentines, oblivious of the very name of liberty, were wallowing in sensual and aesthetic revelry, fascinated by the gorgeous display of wealth and luxury, and the dazzling splendours of art.<sup>1</sup>

One can imagine how deeply Savonarola was affected by the Lucca, and (b) Count Pico da Mirandola (nephew of the great *erudito*), who was also a devoted admirer of Savonarola and was present at his martyrdom. Pico's biography was written about 1520, and was often read to those who had known the great preacher, before it was printed in 1530. German critics (e.g. Ranke) have rejected (a) as a forgery and (b) as a plagiarism, but Villari (in his admirable *Storia di Girolamo Savonarola*) thinks both may be founded on the older *Biographia Latina*, probably written by some monk of S. Marco.

<sup>1</sup> It was the policy of Lorenzo to win popular favour as the Roman Emperors did by their *pæne et Circensibus*. He not only lavishly encouraged all kinds of revelry—'puerile sports,' as Machiavelli calls them—but was wont to join in the often licentious extravagances of Carnival and other festivities. His *Canti carnascialeschi*, which he himself used to recite to the populace, abound in obscenities. See the chapter on Literature.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

new scene amidst which he now found himself. He was no iconoclastic bigot—no ‘ascetic foe of art,’ as a German writer describes him. It was a fairly sane influence that he exercised on artists such as Botticelli and Lorenzo di Credi, the Della Robbias, and the young Fra Bartolomeo and Michelangelo<sup>1</sup>—and doubtless in the monastery of S. Marco, where he at first did humble duty as instructor of novices, he must have often stood enraptured before the tranquil beauty of Angelico’s frescos; and within the convent, where the spiritual influence of the saintly Antonino had not yet ceased to rule, he may have felt for a time content. But a man of his deeply religious, earnest, uncompromising and masterful nature, whose mental training had been mainly based upon the Scriptures, the Fathers, and the Schoolmen, must have been conscious of a very strong antagonism to the general tendency of the age—that exuberant enthusiasm for pagan art and philosophy and for liberty of life and thought which so easily degenerated into libertinism and godless unbelief. It was not, as some would make us believe, a case of belated medievalism attempting to impose antiquated dogma and asceticism on a new world of thought and feeling. The fact that Pico della Mirandola and Poliziano, both to their dying day lovers of Greek literature and philosophy, were his disciples and desired to be buried (in S. Marco) clad in the Dominican habit, is surely enough to controvert such an assertion. Savonarola was by no means behind his age. But, on the other hand, it is a great mistake to regard him as in any way a precursor of Luther. Amidst his fiercest denunciations of the Borgia and the papal court—nay even of that ‘harlot Church whose stench hath risen to heaven,’ and those ‘abominations’ against which some day all Christendom would rise—he probably never dreamed of secession or of any such Reformation as the Germanic or the Anglican. His was the message of those prophets whom in every age men have stoned and burnt and crucified—the

<sup>1</sup> Savonarola founded a school of art in S. Marco and made novices learn artistic work in order to support themselves without mendicancy. As for the *bruciamenti delle Vanità*, see later.

## FLORENCE (1400-1500)

selfsame message as of old, laden with dark forebodings, flashing with wrath against sin, tender in appeal to the sinner. That he was at times unwise, unconciliatory, and perhaps unjust, and that he acquired an overweening belief in his own infallibility and prescience as an envoy of the Deity—all this may be true, but it does not touch the real greatness, or the real humility, of this Dominican friar, whose character, however different in certain qualities, resembled in essentials the character of St. Francis far more than that of Dominic; for it was not to the extermination of heretics nor to the defence of dogma that he devoted his life, but to the ever perilous emprise against the world, the flesh, and the devil.

In 1486 the Dominican authorities, possibly fearing scandals caused by the Frate's fiery invectives; sent him from Florence to Lombardy; but Lorenzo himself, on the petition of Pico, caused him to be recalled, and he resumed his place at S. Marco, where his sermons collected ever larger audiences in the rose-trellised cloister of the monastery, until it was necessary to make use of the Duomo itself. Here the language of the preacher became so bold and pointed in denunciation of pagan indifference, luxury, licentiousness, and 'tyrants' that Lorenzo and his chief satellites began to show decided hostility.<sup>1</sup> Then the discourteous indifference towards the Magnifico displayed by Savonarola on his election to the Priorate of S. Marco (1491), and his disdainful rejection of Lorenzo's visits and gifts, made matters worse.<sup>2</sup> The continued attacks on

<sup>1</sup> An exception, almost from the first, was the stupendously learned and scandalously unorthodox Pico, for whom the Frate had a strange attraction. By this time (1491) Savonarola had published writings which prove that during the last ten years he had made a very careful study of Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy as well as various scientific subjects. His philosophical writings, four short treatises, show knowledge of ancient systems and considerable ingenuity, but no real originality. He is too servile a follower of the Angelic Doctor.

<sup>2</sup> 'Silver and copper sufficed for S. Marco,' he said. The gold was given over to the *Buon'uomini di S. Martino*, a charitable society, founded by S. Antonino, that still exists. Allusions in sermons to Lorenzo's appropriation of a fund for the dowries of poor girls naturally excited great scandal. Lorenzo persuaded his favourite Augustine friar, Mariano, to preach against Savonarola, but, say some, the man's vulgar vituperation disgusted even

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

the Medicean court, as the main source of all the prevalent libertinism and folly and the chief obstacle to the religious life of the people, at last induced Lorenzo to send influential citizens to expostulate, and to hint at the possibility of exile. But, as the Frate's biographer, Burlamacchi, says, the Magnifico found this no good *terreno* for planting his vines. The only response he received was, 'I shall remain, but thou wilt have to leave'—a prophecy soon verified, for in April 1492 Lorenzo, long afflicted with gout, died at his villa of Careggi. Great differences of opinion exist as to what really took place when the dying Lorenzo was visited by Savonarola. It seems probable that he sent for the Frate and, after joining in prayers recited by him, asked for his benediction, thus showing a forgiving and repentant spirit. So much only is stated by Poliziano in his letter, written from Fiesole in May—and he seems to have been the sole witness of the interview or the sole witness that has left any account of it—nor does Machiavelli mention more; but contemporary biographers of Savonarola add what possibly Poliziano did not feel justified to reveal, and what Lorenzo's eulogists ignore or reject,<sup>1</sup> but what is accepted as probably the truth by Pasquale Villari, who is regarded as the highest modern authority on the subject. After the departure of Pico della Mirandola, says this writer, the Frate entered. There were three things for which Lorenzo begged absolution: the sack of Volterra, the appropriation of the dowry fund, and the bloody vengeance taken on the Pazzi conspirators. Before granting this request, the Frate demanded, in the name of God, also three things. The first was living faith in the divine mercy. The second was complete restitution of all that had been unjustly taken from others. Then Savonarola rose and, fixing his gaze on the face of the

his patrons. Others quote Poliziano to prove that he was a delightfully amiable and conciliatory person.

<sup>1</sup> Roscoe ignores it. Young, Armstrong, Horsburgh, and others reject it. The questions arise: Whence did Savonarola's early biographers derive it? Did the Frate himself break his vow in regard to secret confession? Villari says 'no real confession took place.' Others assert that Lorenzo had received absolution and the viaticum before Savonarola's arrival.



## FLORENCE (1400-1500)

dying man, said with deep and solemn voice, 'The third and last is this : you must restore liberty to the people of Florence.' But Lorenzo, collecting all his failing strength, in silent disdain turned his back on the Frate, who departed without giving absolution.<sup>1</sup> Three months later the crafty Innocent VIII dies—in spite of the attempt to prolong his existence by sacrificing three children, purchased at a ducat a head. The papal tiara is now bought by Roderigo Borgia (Alexander VI), whose life and character we have considered in a former chapter, and one of whose many claims to an immortality of infamy rests on his bloodthirsty persecution of Savonarola—although it must be allowed that the Florentine Republic took a shameful part in the final tragedy.

Lorenzo's son, Piero, an arrogant, scatter-brained, and loose-living young fellow, who had gained unpopularity by his brawls, and was at drawn daggers with his own Medicean cousins, was installed as his successor. Mentally and physically he was very different from his father. He took after the Orsini—the ancestors of his mother and his wife. His main ambition, we are told, was to excel 'in riding and jousting and games of *calcio* and *pallone* [say, football and handball], at which he challenged the foremost players in Italy.' Perhaps this youth succeeded in removing Savonarola from Florence for a time, for we find him at Venice, at Pisa (preaching in S. Caterina), and at Bologna,<sup>2</sup> while his rival, Mariano, harangues congregations in Florentine churches. But in 1493 he was again in Florence, re-elected Prior of S. Marco and thundering once more in the pulpits of S. Lorenzo and the Duomo, and

<sup>1</sup> It is a most interesting question whether in a lately discovered picture (now in the Uffizi), designed by Botticelli and coarsely painted in the 17th century, we may discover an allusion to this deathbed scene. The painting represents the Seven Magistrates of the Republic and many other notabilities (among them Leonardo da Vinci) paying homage to the infant Christ (perhaps as 'King of Florence'), and conspicuous is a Dominican monk turning to a figure that seems to represent Lorenzo and pointing eagerly towards the Child. For the election of Christ as *Rex Florentini populi*, see p. 405 n.

<sup>2</sup> Anyhow his courage was not damped by Piero's hostility, for when the wife of the Bologna despot, Bentivoglio, came rustling late into church he, it is said, exclaimed : 'Here comes the devil to interrupt God's word.'

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

ever greater and more excited crowds flocked to hear him, for to his denunciations of sin and tyranny were now added ever gloomier forebodings of some terrible calamity impending over Italy—visions of a hand amidst the midnight sky holding a sword inscribed with the threatening words, *Gladius Domini in terram cito et velociter* ('The sword of the Lord about to fall on the earth soon and swiftly'). Nor was it long before the report arrived that the great French army of Charles VIII was pouring over the Alpine passes.<sup>1</sup>

The descent into Italy of the half silly but powerful French monarch, Charles VIII, and his various exploits, until his exit after the battle of Fornovo, have been narrated in the chapters on Milan, Naples, and Rome. It remains to relate certain facts in which Florence was specially interested. It will be remembered that when Charles had crossed the Apennines south of Parma he was met near Spezia, on the frontiers of Florentine territory, by Piero, who either through cowardice or treachery (for Florence was in alliance with Naples, which Charles came to attack) surrendered to him the fortresses of Sarzana and Pietrasanta and the towns of Pisa and Livorno. The rumour of this disgraceful transaction so infuriated the Florentine populace that it was scarcely restrained by Savonarola's entreaties from sacking the Medicean palaces.<sup>2</sup> The Signoria met and decided 'no longer to remain under this childish governance.' They also sent envoys to meet Charles at Pisa, among them Piero Capponi and Savonarola. Before these envoys arrived, Piero de' Medici, scenting danger, rode off to Florence with his retinue.

<sup>1</sup> Pico tells us how, on the arrival of this news, a vast crowd filled the cathedral. At last Savonarola mounted the pulpit. He had been preaching of late on the book of Genesis, and had reached the Deluge. After gazing around him on the great silent multitude he suddenly thundered out his text with terrific voice, paralysing the hearts of all his hearers: *Ecce ego adducam aquas super terram*. In this year (1494), so fatal otherwise for Italy, literature suffered the loss of Boiardo and Poliziano. Pico, too, died on the day Charles entered Florence.

<sup>2</sup> The line that Savonarola took at this crisis shows his character. From the pulpit in the Duomo he preached—not revolt and vengeance, but love and unity, and repentance for the sins that had drawn down the sword of the Lord on the guilty city.

## FLORENCE (1400-1500)

At Florence he was received coldly, and when he attempted to force his way into the Palazzo Vecchio he was shut out, and surrounded by a deriding crowd he beat a retreat, brandishing his sword in impotent rage. Then the big bell of the Signoria (the bellowing *Vacca*) summoned the people to the great Piazza, and a vast crowd collected and greeted with wild enthusiasm the appearance of bands of armed citizens—some of them clad in old raiment of pre-Medicean times and bearing rusty weapons that had served in the days of the Ciompi riot. While the city was thus in commotion there arrived a messenger from the envoys. In hot haste he had ridden from Pisa bringing confirmation of the humiliating surrender made by Piero of Florentine strongholds. The indignant populace forthwith bid the messenger lead them to assail the Medici Palace,<sup>1</sup> and marched through the streets with the cry, *Abbasso le Palle!* Then, after a brave but vain attempt at a counter-demonstration made by the young Cardinal Giovanni, the cowardly Piero sneaks out of Florence by the Porta S. Gallo and seeks refuge at Verona; but being coldly received by the Bentivoglio he proceeds to Venice. Here his brother Giovanni joins him, having managed to escape in the disguise of a monk after having deposited many of the Medicean treasures, rescued from the infuriated mob, in the charge of the monks of S. Marco, whose Prior, though the great adversary of Medicean tyranny, was apparently the only man in Florence to be trusted.<sup>2</sup>

The exceedingly bold language that the Frate used towards Charles at Pisa, threatening him with the wrath of heaven if he should harm the city of Florence, was, curiously enough, not resented; on the contrary, it seems to have made a deep and favourable impression; and Florence was in grievous need of some such champion, for she was in great distress,

<sup>1</sup> This messenger was Franc. Valori, once the intimate companion of Lorenzo but now a *Piagnone* ('Weeper,' i.e. follower of Savonarola), and hostile to Piero.

<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately the mob succeeded in destroying the part of the convent in which these treasures were deposited. Many were also stolen by Charles VIII and his officers, as even the Frenchman Commynes allows.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

threatened not only by a powerful band of exiled Medicean partisans but also by the revolt of several subject cities, one being Pisa itself, which took advantage of the presence of the French to throw off the Florentine yoke and cast the 'Marzocco' (the Florentine Lion) into the sea.

Inspired by the courage of Savonarola, the Florentines awaited in grim silence the advent of Charles, who from Siena sent forward officials to mark with chalk the doors of palaces and houses selected as quarters for him and his troops.<sup>1</sup> The citizens were then ordered to hang out their gayest flags and tapestries; and 'with spear on thigh,' as a conqueror, the French monarch entered the city.<sup>2</sup>

The interviews of Charles with Piero's mother and wife (both Roman Orsini) and the messages that he dispatched to the outlaw in Venice<sup>3</sup> made the Florentines uneasy. Fights took place between the citizens and the foreign soldiers, and when at last Charles summoned the four deputies elected to treat with him and bade be read to them in his presence his demand for certain feudal rights and a huge sum of money, such wrath overcame one of them, the above-mentioned Piero Capponi,<sup>4</sup> that he snatched the paper out of the hand of the King's secretary and tore it in pieces, exclaiming, *As you demand things so dishonouring, you can sound your trumpets and we shall sound our bells.* Charles did not accept the challenge, and after spending some time at the Medici Palace in luxurious ease he departed to fulfil his 'divine mission' of conquering Naples, yielding to the persuasions of Savonarola, whose personality seems to have had on him an influence almost comparable with that exercised by Pope Leo over Attila.

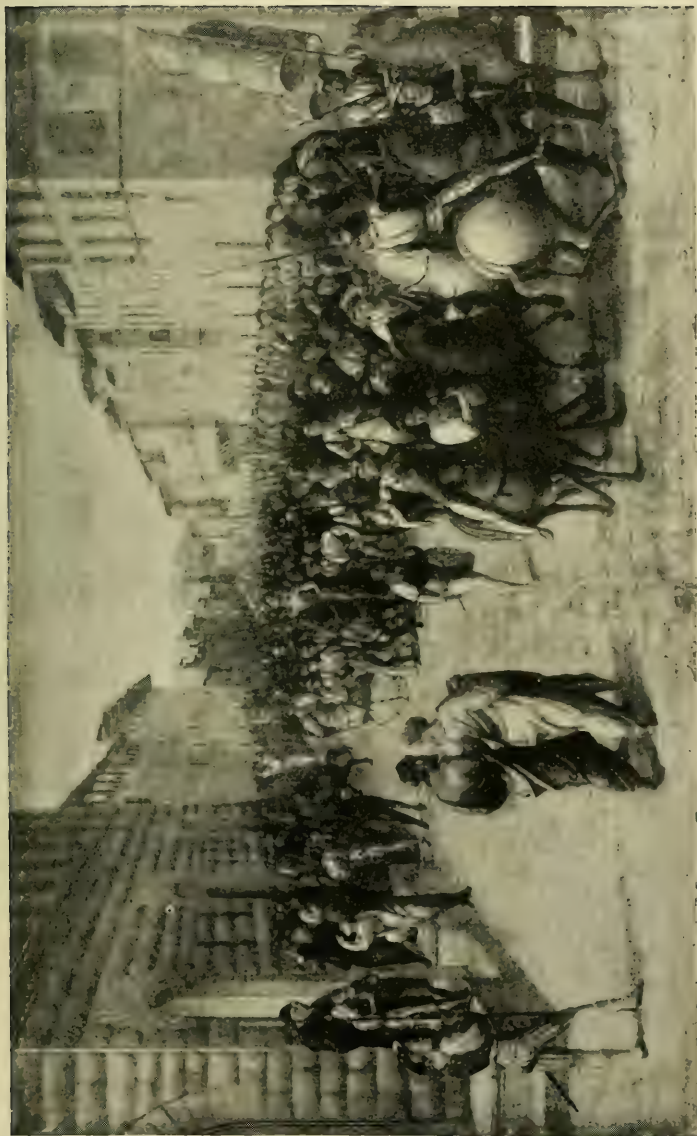
<sup>1</sup> See the remark of Pope Alexander (p. 248 n.).

<sup>2</sup> *Armato egli e il suo cavallo, con la lancia in sulla coscia in segno di vittoria* (Guicciardini). See the illustration, Fig. 34.

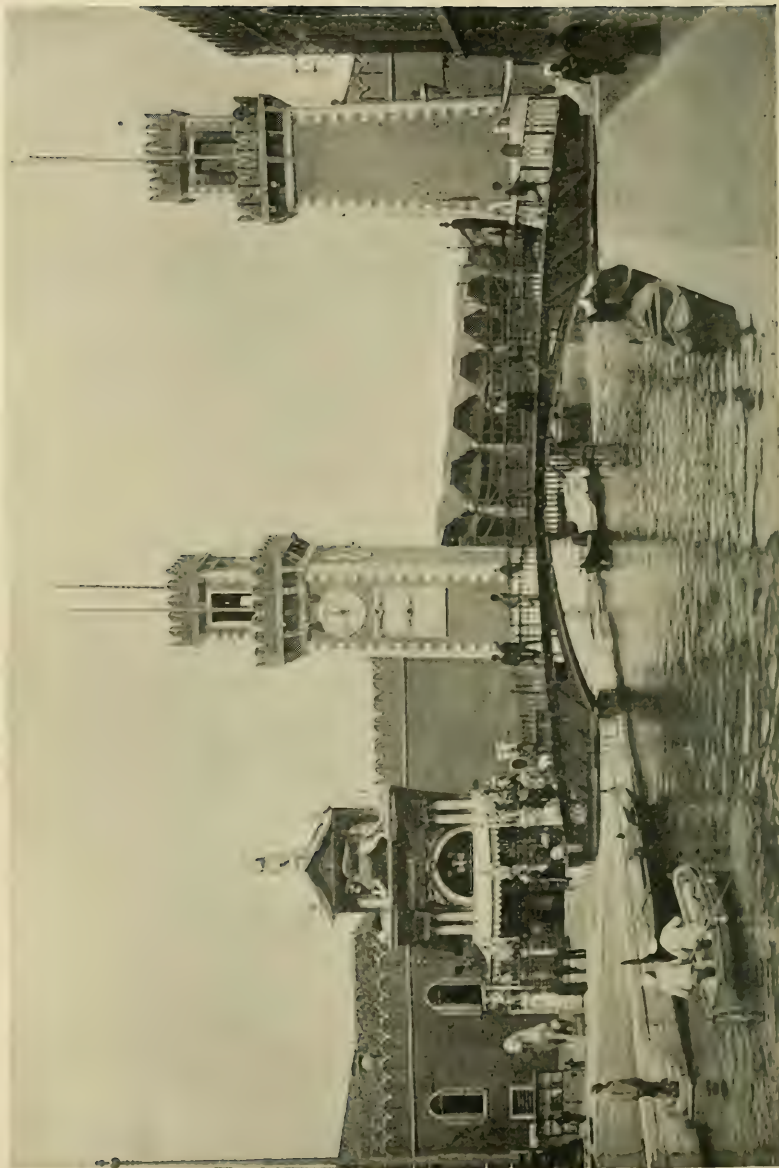
<sup>3</sup> A price was set on his head by the Florentines. The Venetian Senate advised him not to trust Charles and put him under secret surveillance to prevent his leaving Venice. But we find him soon after at Rome.

<sup>4</sup> Machiavelli wrote some clever verses on a capon overcrowing a hundred cocks (Frenchmen).





34. ENTRY OF CHARLES VIII INTO FLORENCE



35. THE ARSENAL, VENICE

## FLORENCE (1400-1500)

Savonarola's sermons now are of another mood. Instead of insisting solely on love and repentance and general amnesty he begins to suggest political reform, and on his advice, after the abolition of the Medicean 'Seventy,' a Greater Council, 'on the pattern of the Venetian *Maggior Consiglio*'—which, however, was anything but democratic—was empowered to sanction the election of magistrates and the passing of laws. To this nominally popular assembly were nominally subordinated the other numerous Councils; to it appeal was permitted even from the verdicts of the Signoria and the *Gonfaloniere di Giustizia*.<sup>1</sup> But the real nature of this reform is apparent from the fact that—perhaps to frustrate any plebiscite for the return of the Medici—the calling of an *Arengo* (Assembly of the People) was made on Savonarola's advice a capital offence, seeing that the *Maggior Consiglio* was 'the work of God, not of man,' and the only purpose of a popular vote would be 'to snatch the power from the hands of the people'! This policy of Savonarola is applauded by the cautious Guicciardini as much safer than would have been a more sudden and complete change from tyranny to democracy; and he might have added that what change there was in that direction was, while Savonarola lived, more apparent than real, although the new despotism exercised an influence very different from that of the old.

When Charles VIII was on his undignified retreat from Naples and Rome, probably accompanied by the exiled Piero and intending to have a slash at Florence, Savonarola boldly went to meet him at Poggibonsi (near Siena) and reproached him for having failed in his mission of conquest and reformation. Moreover, the Frate had been vouchsafed some vision of Madonna lilies which intimated a friendly intertwining of the lily of Florence with the fleur-de-lys, and he hoped to secure from the French king the promised restoration of Pisa. But

<sup>1</sup> It was now (1495) that the huge *Sala del Grande Consiglio* (*de' Cinquecento*) in the Palazzo Vecchio was constructed. Also Donatello's *Judith* and his *David* (Fig. 47 (a)) were transferred, as apt symbols of the Republic, from the Medici Palace, the latter to the court and the former to the main entrance of the Palazzo Vecchio (where later Michelangelo's *David* took its place).

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

this time the charm failed. It perhaps saved Florence from attack (though this was due more probably to the allied forces now gathering under the Gonzaga to dispute the passage of the French), but Pisa was not restored—nor reacquired by Florence till 1509—while Sarzana was sold by Charles to the Genoese, and Pietrasanta to the people of Lucca.

The Quadruple Alliance which had succeeded in expelling the French was naturally incensed at the Florentines for standing aloof and dallying with Charles, and the wrath of Pope Alexander VI against Savonarola was intensified by the lamentation of Piero and the eloquence of the Augustine friar Mariano, both of whom had taken refuge at Rome. In Florence, too, Savonarola began to encounter serious hostility. Not only had the boon companions of Piero and other disgusted pleasure-seekers clubbed together into a band of *Compagnacci* ('Jolly Good Fellows') in order to assail with ridicule and personal violence the followers of the Frate—the 'Weepers' (*Piagnoni*), as they were contemptuously called—but a very strong political party was formed of discontents who adopted the name *Arrabbiati* ('The Infuriated') and were unwearied in vilifying Savonarola and his subservient Councils for not having aided the other four states to eject the barbarian invader.<sup>1</sup>

The descriptions given by numerous chroniclers, and vividly repictured in *Romola*, of the state of things in Florence during the supremacy of Savonarola are probably known to most of my readers. Such expressions as 'the burning of Vanities' and 'the children of the Frate' recall to the memory scenes which I need not attempt to depict anew.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The *Arrabbiati* were, however, hostile to the *Compagnacci* on the subject of the return of the Medici, as was also Lodovico of Milan, who evidently hoped to add Florence to his duchy. Piero the Unfortunate, as he is too pityingly called, depended mainly on Venice and the Pope. After leading a licentious life at Rome, where he was pensioned by his brother, Cardinal Giovanni (later Leo X), he made an attempt to enter Florence with a few armed men from Siena, but was ridiculed and cannonaded by the Florentines from the ramparts of the Porta Romana and had to beat a retreat. For his further history see Index.

<sup>2</sup> There were two great *bruciamenti delle Vanità*—on the last day of Carnival in 1497 and 1498. These Vanities consisted of Carnival dresses, masks, etc.,

340



## FLORENCE (1400-1500)

During the last eighteen months of his life the number and power of Savonarola's enemies were greatly increased by the furious hostility that his attacks on the papal court occasioned. So vehemently did he in his Lenten sermons of 1497 assail the 'harlot Church of Rome' and the character of Alexander VI that the Pope, goaded on by the violent tirades of Fra Mariano, threatened excommunication—a threat disdainfully ignored by our Frate, who could still depend on the support of the Government and of a majority of the citizens. But divers influences were at work to undermine this support, and a blind impetuosity, regardless both of prudence and of peril, was ere long to bring about sudden collapse. The attempt by Piero to enter Florence with an armed band, although frustrated, caused immense agitation, in the midst of which the Compagnacci succeeded in turning the ridicule of the mob against the preacher by placing the dead body of an ass in the Duomo pulpit before his arrival, and in the ensuing tumult Savonarola nearly lost his life.

Such occurrences made Pope Alexander conclude that he might reckon on considerable support among the Florentines, and as the insolent Friar refused to obey a summons to appear before the papal tribunal at Rome he dispatched a commissary with a Brief of Excommunication. This official, however, not daring to proceed beyond Siena, sends forward the document, which, at first treated as merely a private encyclical, was ultimately by the Pope's orders published in the Franciscan S. Croce, the Dominican S. Maria Novella, and other important churches, where lights were extinguished and silence proclaimed. The convent of S. Marco was put under the charge of the Vicar-General of the Order. Savonarola was deposed and probably obscene pictures and books (such as Lorenzo's Carnival songs). It seems to be a mistake to suppose that Savonarola himself demanded the burning of inoffensive works of art, although perhaps the 'nudes' of Baccio and other artists who voluntarily burnt their paintings may not have been obscene. If the *Decameron* was burnt, it would have been only what Boccaccio himself is said to have wished. The pyre was 30 cubits high and, like Dante's Mount of Purgatory, had seven tiers; in these were represented the seven deadly sins. The Loggia de' Signori (now Loggia de' Lanzi) was crowded with the white-clothed *Fanciulli del Frate*.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

from his Priorate and forbidden to preach. For about seven months (May to December) he was silent, but on Christmas Day 1497 he celebrated Mass to a vast congregation in the Duomo. He then yielded to the urgent appeals of his followers and to the invitation of the Signoria to resume his sermons. Thereupon once more bands of *fanciulli* appeared in the streets rebuking public vice and luxury, and once more Vanities sent their smoke heavenward. The defiance thus hurled at the Roman Pontiff was aggravated tenfold by an act worthy of Luther—an act evidently incited by the horrors that of late had been taking place at Rome, namely the murder of the Duke of Gandia and other atrocious and shameful deeds. This act was the proposal to hold a Council which should by the universal vote of Western Christendom depose Pope Alexander; and in support of this proposal Savonarola indited and sent letters to the Emperor, and to the Kings of France, Spain, England, and Hungary. In these letters it was affirmed not only that the Borgia was guilty of many crimes besides the *scelleratissimo peccato della simonia, con cui ha comperato la sedia papale*, but that he was ‘not a Christian and did not believe in any God—a sin surpassing even that of paganism.’ Of these letters the one addressed to our Henry VII is lost. That which was dispatched to Charles VIII fell into the hands of bandits, who gave it over to Lodovico of Milan. He sent it to Alexander, and it is easy to imagine the fate to which the supreme Pontiff now yearned to consign the audacious Dominican friar.

For a short time the fury of the Borgia was confronted by the calm determination of the Florentine Government not to allow interference in a matter affecting their liberties; but the fear of Interdict as well as the ever-increasing vehemence of the Arrabbiati ere long prevailed, and Savonarola was forbidden to preach. He accepted the inhibition and on March 18, 1498, bade farewell to his sorrowing congregation. The tragic events of the next two months—the desertion of Savonarola by the fickle populace and by the contemptible magistracy, and at last, alas! even by some of his fellow-*frati*—the ever

## FLORENCE (1400-1500)

more furious onslaughts of his enemies, especially of rabid Franciscans and other ecclesiastics incited by papal emissaries—those pitiable scenes of ‘trial by fire’ that recall to our minds the superstitions and atrocities of the Dark Ages or of darkest Africa—the assault on the convent by the howling mob, supported by the mercenaries of the Government—the last loving address of Savonarola to his friends in the convent library, ‘under the noble and solemn arcades of Michelozzi’—the arrest<sup>1</sup>—the agonizing oft-repeated tortures—the pathetic parting of the friends—the written words of farewell, full of calm faith and resignation—the sickening horrors of his last moments—all is so well known, so revolting, so harrowing, that I shall not attempt to depict anew this midnight orgy of fiends, star-lit, as it were, by the calm and tender radiance of courage, long-suffering, and forgiveness.

After the death of Savonarola Florence passed through a period of reaction and inaction—if not of shame and remorse. The constitution as modified by the Frate, with its Greater Council, remained unaltered in its essential features. The invasion of the Milanese duchy by Louis XII and the fall of Lodovico did not distress the Florentines, for the Moro had for many years been suspected of harbouring designs against the Republic. From Louis they received a gracious message of approval for their constant loyalty, and a promise to reduce to submission the rebellious city of Pisa—a promise that was to fail of fulfilment for ten years, for Pisa fought obstinately for independence. It was in the course of these discreditable negotiations with the French monarch that two Florentine ambassadors were sent to France in the summer of 1500—one of them being Niccolò Machiavelli, who since June 1498 (three weeks after Savonarola’s martyrdom) had been the

<sup>1</sup> The exact spot, near the door of the famous Medicean Library in S. Marco (the convent adjoining the church), where Savonarola was arrested is marked by a tablet, and in the Piazza della Signoria a slightly elevated bronze plate now marks the spot where he and his two companions were hanged and burnt. On May 23 this plate is generally covered with wreaths, but at other times it is exposed rather shamefully to attrition and pollution. Savonarola relics are to be seen in the convent (Museum).

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

chief secretary of the Signoria ;<sup>1</sup> and it is noticeable that a maxim similar to that propounded by Machiavelli as to the advisability of securing a 'constitutional despot' seems to have now once more regained approval at Florence, for ere long (1502) we shall find the office of the Gonfaloniere bestowed *for life* on Piero Soderini, son of that Tommaso Soderini who



PRIVATE CRESTS OF THE MEDICI

(See pp. 313, 316)

lent his generous and powerful support to the accession of the young Lorenzo de' Medici.

It was this Piero Soderini who, in 1503, invited Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo to prepare designs for decorating the great *Sala* which had been built for the Maggior Consiglio of Savonarola. And here let us note that about the time of Savonarola's martyrdom Leonardo had finished painting his wondrous fresco of the Last Supper in the Refectory of S. Maria delle Grazie at Milan, and that a short time after the same tragedy Baccio della Porta began his first great sacred painting

<sup>1</sup> Also of the *Dieci di Balìa*. To judge from a letter written by Machiavelli in March 1498, he felt nothing but contemptuous dislike for Savonarola, whom he later sarcastically called 'the discomfited prophet.'



## FLORENCE (1400-1500)

—the fresco of the Last Judgment (once in the Hospital of S. Maria Nuova and now in the Uffizi)—which he left to his friend Albertinelli to finish because he was so deeply moved by the terrible death of the beloved Frate that he entered the convent of S. Marco and took the name of Fra Bartolomeo.

The facts of literary and artistic interest connected with the early Medici and with the era of Savonarola are almost infinite in number. Of these a few have been touched upon. Others will be given, as far as space permits, in the two chapters on Literature and Art.

## CHAPTER V

### VENICE (1400-1500)

THE story of Venice during the Quattrocento, as far as it consists of wars and political events, has been sketched in a former chapter. In order to make the best use of limited space, I shall now select for more minute treatment a few episodes and personages; and shall begin with a few facts connected with the state of things before and at the beginning of the century.

It will be remembered that before the annexation of Padua in 1405 Venice had nothing, or scarcely anything, in the way of mainland territory, while her maritime rivals, Pisa and Genoa and Amalfi, possessed enough *Hinterland* to supply them fairly with food in case of sea-blockade. The city was therefore entirely dependent on its fleets, not only for the maintenance of its great oversea trade and empire, but for its very existence in case of war, except when it could reckon on the aid of friendly *terra ferma* neighbours.<sup>1</sup>

From early days both Venice and Genoa—and Pisa too, until the disaster at Meloria—had great trade-fleets. We hear of all three, and of Amalfi also, supplying not only war-galleys but transport vessels for other belligerents, especially for the immense hosts of the Crusaders. The mercantile fleet of Venice by about 1400 seems to have consisted of over 3000 vessels, great and small. By far the greater number of the Venetian merchantmen belonged to the State and were let out to the highest bidders. Six times a year a large flotilla, duly armed and convoyed, started for the Levant, or the Aegean, or the Black Sea, or the southern or western Mediter-

<sup>1</sup> For Venetian fleets and colonies see pp. 119 n., 125. My statistics are derived mainly from Boccardo's *Storia del Commercio*.

## VENICE (1400-1500)

anean, or the distant Atlantic coasts and the ports of England and Flanders. All regulations as to crew, outfit, and route were prescribed by the *Maggior Consiglio*. Many of these vessels were easily convertible into war-galleys, so that in case of war a large navy was quickly ready.<sup>1</sup> The size of these war-galleys varied considerably. The classical names *Biremis*, *Triremis*, and so on (if not now merely pedantic and meaningless terms, as Guglielminotti avers in his *Vocabolario marino*), were used to denote vessels in which two, three, or more rowers, *each with his own oar*, shared a single bench.<sup>2</sup> If we may accept the rather startling statement made by Boccardo that the Genoese, about the year 1295, brought against the Venetians 200 galleys with 45,000 combatants, the average Italian war-galley of that age, like that of the heroic age, contained about 200 or 250 men. In early days the whole crew seems to have taken part in fighting; but later, when ramming became more usual, the motive power needed increasing. Slaves were then used, and were chained to their oars. The fighting crews were composed of men selected somewhat in the same way as in the case of the ancient Athenian *naucrariæ*. The male population of every *sestiere* (parish) of Venice was divided into groups of 12. From each group one man was selected as conscript, and he received as pay 1 *lira* monthly from each of the 11 remaining men, and 5 *lire* from the State (the 16 *lire* being about equivalent to 80 *lire* of to-day). As the population at the end of the Trecento was about 200,000, this would give something like 3000 conscripts of the first category.

The system of conscription and enforced contribution to the pay of crews, and still more the State ownership of lucrative merchant vessels, convertible into war-galleys, naturally reduced the cost of Venice's sea-power; moreover, before she adopted

<sup>1</sup> By about 1450 the Turkish peril obliged the Venetians to institute a standing navy.

<sup>2</sup> So stated by Boccardo, and by Levi (*Navi Venete*), who refers to a picture by Carpaccio in the Accademia at Venice; but it seems even more difficult to understand than the ordinary explanation of the classical names. Not till about 1550, says Boccardo, did all the men on one bench pull at the same oar.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

a *terra ferma* policy she had but little need of land forces. But when she began to keep up both a standing navy and a land army, and to hire mercenaries and their *condottieri* (Carmagnola, Colleoni, the Gonzaga, Gattamelata, and the Sforza), very heavy expenses were occasioned. These, however, were richly compensated by an enormous increase of wealth, due to the vast expansion of trade and the domination (after Genoa's rivalry had been suppressed) of all the markets of the Levant, Euxine, Aegean, West Mediterranean, and still more distant seas.<sup>1</sup> The Quattrocento saw this prosperity of Venice at its meridian. It witnessed also the beginning of that splendid setting of her greatness which, though illumined by the glories of Venetian art, was bound to end in her total eclipse as a great Italian state; for the easy accumulation of great riches produced, as was natural, great evils, and if in earlier days Dante could justly rebuke their *sfrenata lascivia* (unbridled wantonness), and Petrarca, who lived among them long, could describe their contempt for all who 'still believed the fables of Christianity and those asses' tales of Heaven and Hell,' it is not surprising that in the days of mainland dominion and sea-supremacy and a colonial empire, amidst boundless wealth and all the baleful influences of a sham republican plutocracy,<sup>2</sup> the Venetians became notorious for luxury and vice, and for that overweening insolence—that *ὕβρις*—which aroused the wrath and hatred of those many enemies who at Cambrai at the beginning of the Cinquecento bound themselves together by an oath to crush for ever the pride of the Republic and its lust for domination.

The courage with which Venice defied this powerful com-

<sup>1</sup> Overland trade, too, was now beginning to be very important, for Venice had become the emporium of Eastern products in transit for France, Flanders, and England. Soon, however, this was to be almost totally ruined by the alarming advance of the Turkish power, the discovery of the Cape route, and the maritime greatness of Spain and Portugal.

<sup>2</sup> Note that though *Arti* existed in Venice they had no political influence, there being no old feudal nobility against which 'fat' burghers and the working classes might combine, as at Florence. Out of 200,000 inhabitants only about 1000 'patricians' were capable of holding office. In Florence there were about 3000 out of 90,000.



## VENICE (1400-1500)

bination and continued for so many years to struggle against the Turks was most admirable; and yet we cannot doubt that, had she been inspired by any true idea of liberty, her empire might have proved far more enduring.<sup>1</sup> We have already noted in the case of Candia (p. 125) that the empire of Venice, as also her home constitution, was founded on false principles and was therefore doomed to dissolution. She was, as a state, eminently jealous, suspicious, competitive, and ungenerous—incapable of according self-rule, or federation, or even justice, to her colonies—incapable of inspiring affection and loyalty—fighting with embittered and revengeful feelings in her wars of *sacro egoismo*, and at times (as in the case of Otranto) even capable of treasonable collusion with the common foe of Christendom. And yet—in spite of all this—who is there that does not love Venice and is not fascinated by her history and her art?

### FRANCESCO FOSCARI (1423-57)

Passing over, as already sufficiently related, the events of the first quarter of the century, during which Michele Steno and Tommaso Mocenigo were the Doges, we find Francesco Foscari in power. His accession marks a most important crisis in Venetian history, for, firstly, a momentous change was taking place as regards the ducal office, so that Foscari was the first Doge of a new order,<sup>2</sup> and, secondly, Venice was

<sup>1</sup> This reproach, as we all know, has been indignantly repelled by Ruskin. That there was much that was noble in the Venetians and in their art nobody denies, but the Venetian government—mostly in the hands of plutocrats—gave as little sign of noble ideals as did ancient Athens, whose idea of liberty, it has been said, meant the enslavement of all others but herself. Even Villari, who—like most of us—is fascinated by Venice, is obliged to allow that the Venetians 'regarded with pleasure the ruin of Italy because they hoped thus to dominate it more easily.'

<sup>2</sup> The mode of his abdication—of which more later—was one proof of the ever more oligarchical limitation of the authority of a Doge, who was originally dependent on the will of the people. The numerous councils and official advisers (*Pregadi*, *Procuratori*, *Avvogatori*, and the *Dieci*) controlled him all the more strictly since at his coronation he was forced to renounce the right to summon the popular Assembly (*Arengo*). But the more the Doge became a mere figure-head the more splendid was the external pomp of the office. The

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

arriving at a most momentous decision: it was determining to abandon the timid policy of old Mocenigo—that of avoiding at all costs a collision with the rapidly expanding domination of Milan, whose crafty and ambitious ruler, Filippo Maria Visconti, was reconstructing the great duchy—or kingdom—which his father, Gian Galeazzo, had failed to complete.

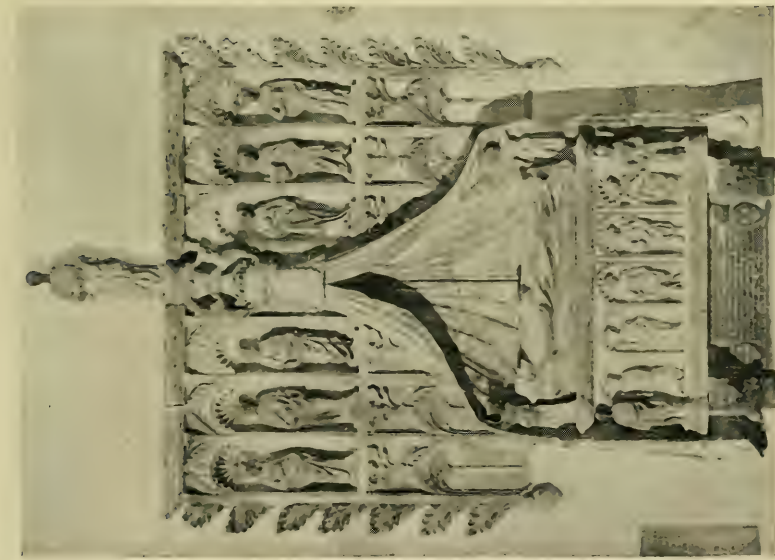
Towards the west the expansion of Venetian territory, since the annexation of Padua, had been stayed by the influence of Mocenigo and the pacificists; but towards the north and the east it had been, even during Mocenigo's reign, in full development. The cities of Treviso, Belluno, Udine, and Gorizia had been occupied by the Venetians, as well as parts of Istria and Dalmatia. The latter regions were claimed by the German Emperor, Sigismund, and he had therefore declared war on Venice and had invaded the Friuli; but he was at that time (c. 1418) much harassed by the 'Hussite' war waged by the Bohemians to avenge the martyrdom of John Huss, who had been burnt at Constanza. The Venetians were therefore able to repel the barbarian invader and to extend their frontier to the Alps.

Now for some years the Florentines, routed on several occasions by the Milanese, had been soliciting in vain the alliance of Venice against Milan. So desperate and so angry had they become that they even threatened to come to terms with the Visconti and recognize him as king. Doge Foscari, who was at first fiercely opposed by the powerful peace party and had many public and private enemies,<sup>1</sup> had in the space of two years gained considerable popularity and political influence. And now something happened that caused the triumph of his anti-Milanese policy.

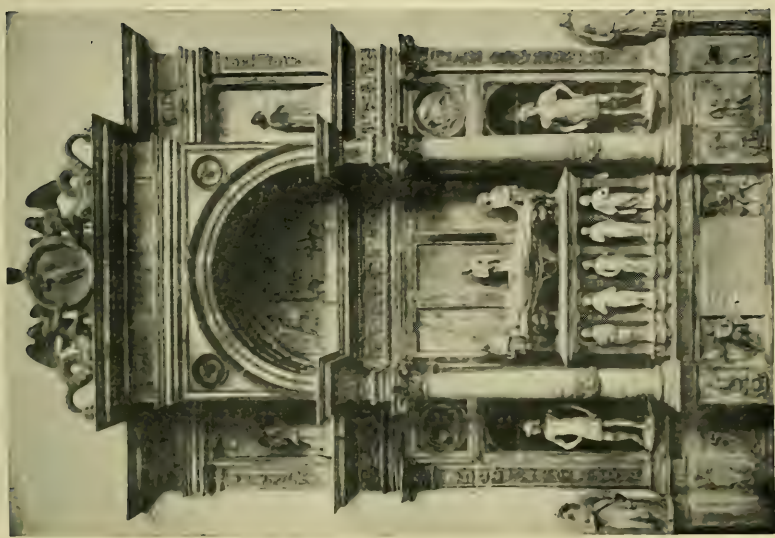
A certain Francesco Bussone, a Piemontese swineherd's son, called **Carmagnola** from the name of his native town (some

vast *Sala del M. Consiglio* was now first opened and used. Somewhat later the magnificent palaces of the Nine *Procuratori*, which flank the Piazza, were erected.

<sup>1</sup> He had been, though comparatively young, *Procuratore* and *Capo de' Dieci*, and was accused of having used public money to buy votes for the Dogeship.



36. (a) TOMB OF TOMMASO MOCEENIGO



(b) TOMB OF ANDREA VENDRAMIN





37. CATERINA CORNARO



## VENICE (1400-1500)

20 miles south of Turin), had become a *condottiere*, and had so greatly distinguished himself in the service of Filippo Maria, conquering for him various rebel cities, as Piacenza and Brescia, and even Genoa itself, that he had been accepted as the husband of one of the Duke's daughters and was regarded as a member of the Visconti family. But Filippo Maria was crafty and suspicious. Suddenly—possibly for good reasons—Carmagnola was deposed from office. He fled to Savoy, but being unable to persuade the Duke to rebel against Milan he betook himself to Venice. Here he was warmly welcomed by Foscari and the war party, and after imparting much valuable information as to Milanese military affairs he was given the post of *condottiere*, and his popularity seems to have been strengthened by a mean attempt to poison him made by some agent of the Milanese duke. Foscari, as was natural, used this turn of the tide. His fiery philippics against Filippo Maria so aroused the Venetians that they voted for alliance with Florence<sup>1</sup> and war against Milan (December 1425).

Carmagnola began well; but suddenly, when on the point of capturing Brescia, he complained of 'delicate health'—caused, he said, by a fall from his horse—and obtained leave, grudgingly given, to undergo a hot mud-bath cure at Abano.<sup>2</sup> Here he seems to have kept up a correspondence with Filippo Maria—or anyhow to have received communications from Milan—and when the Venetians without his aid had captured and annexed Brescia, and the Visconti had signed and broken a peace, and the mud baths had been allowed ample time to work their cure and reinstate him in his command, he began to make all manner of excuses: men, money, provisions, and forage—all were lacking in turn. Next he fails to support a Venetian flotilla that ascends the Po to attack Piacenza

<sup>1</sup> Although much irritated by various defeats and the loss of Lucca, Florence did little notable in this war. It was a period of great trade activity and the beginning of the rivalry of great merchant princes, such as the Albizzi and the Medici. Machiavelli (iv, 23) tells us of an interesting but vain design by Brunelleschi to recapture Lucca by damming the Serchio and flooding the town.

<sup>2</sup> Said to be Livy's birthplace (near Padua). The hot spring (*Aquae Patavinae*) was used as a cure also by the ancient Romans.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

and Pavia; then he is suspected of purposely allowing his troops to be beaten, and when to allay such suspicions he gains a decided victory over the Sforza and Piccinino, near the river Oglio, he invents reasons for releasing his prisoners and not following up his success; and soon afterwards (1428) he again insists on undergoing a course of mud baths, although the authorities at Venice pronounce his delicate health to be a fiction. In spite, however, of all this the general result of the fighting was favourable to the Venetians. Their frontier was carried forward as far as the river Adda—the farthest western boundary of any permanence that *terra ferma* Veneto ever reached.

A peace was signed in 1428, but Milan chafed at the loss of territory, and Filippo Maria, who was well versed in *condottiere* nature, constantly plied Carmagnola with bribes and promises, while Venice seems to have outdone the wily Duke himself in extravagant bidding, offering the suspected but indispensable mercenary even the Signoria of Milan if he could eject its ruler.<sup>1</sup> Naturally such a hollow peace was bound to be short-lived. War was again declared, and once again Carmagnola distinguished himself by masterly inactivity. At last the Venetian Government decided to put an end to the business. He was summoned to Venice, and apparently quite unconscious of having excited suspicion he obeyed the summons.

When he arrived at the Doges' Palace his retinue was dismissed on the pretext that he was to dine with the Doge. After waiting long in the *Sala delle Quattro Porte* he was informed that Doge Foscari had been taken suddenly ill and could not receive him; so he began to descend—evidently by the *Scala dei Censori*—in order to return to his gondola. 'This way!' exclaimed an attendant official. 'Nay,' said

<sup>1</sup> It seems likely that *condottieri* employed by Venice were nominally not allowed to pay themselves and their men by pillage (as was generally the case), but received fixed pay, and were rather strictly supervised—with *Provveditori* to control them, as we have noted in the case of the Admiral Vettor Pisani (p. 127). This gave Filippo Maria a distinct advantage in the matter of bribes.

## VENICE (1400-1500)

Carmagnola, 'that is not the way.' 'Oh, yes, pardon me, it is,' answered the officer; and they hustled him down into a dungeon—doubtless one of those *Pozzi* on which, as well as on the *Piombi*, we seem to have wasted a great deal of sentiment, seeing that, according to a modern writer, they were really quite cheerful, rat-proof, dry, well-kept, and nicely disinfected ground-floor apartments, through the iron-barred windows of which one could converse comfortably with passers-by.<sup>1</sup>

After a long and exhaustive trial he was condemned to be beheaded 'with a gag in the mouth and hands bound behind the back,' and the sentence was carried out the same evening (May 5, 1432) at the usual place of execution—between the columns of the Piazzetta.

It was shortly after this that Cosimo de' Medici, as we have seen in the last chapter, being exiled was welcomed at Venice; and his return to Florence in 1434, which many writers regard as the triumph of despotism over republicanism, was doubtless approved, if not aided, by the Venetian Government—facts which show not only that Venice was annoyed at the inertia of its nominal republican ally, but also that its official sympathies were anything but democratic, although it called itself a republic. And another fact gives striking evidence of its readiness to court the favour of princes, even of a hereditary foe, in order to gain the objects of its 'sacred egoism'—to satiate that land-hunger, that *sacra fames*, which ere long was to arouse the hatred and hostility of a great part of Europe. This fact was occasioned by the vehement protest made by the Patriarch of Aquileia at the Council of Basel against the Venetians for having seized his patrimony. The Council, ignoring the Jovian prerogative of the Pontiff,<sup>2</sup> launched a

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Horatio Brown (*Historical Sketch of Venice*) says that the *Piombi* were probably 'more comfortable, lighter, and better ventilated' than the *Pozzi*. There was, we are told, an infirmary for delicate prisoners and a surgeon to testify whether culprits could stand torture without injury to their health. Also the quality and quantity of food and wine supplied to the incarcerated were carefully inspected.

<sup>2</sup> As republic Venice should have supported Councils against Popes, and nominally did so—except when its sacred egoism forbade. On this occasion it was naturally on the side of the Venetian Pope Eugenius, who, by the way,

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

*brutum fulmen* of excommunication against Venice. Then Venice—which not long before had driven the German Sigismund and the Aquileian patriarch out of the Friuli—in order to obtain ‘investiture’ and sanction for its new conquests actually made overtures to this same Germanic ‘Holy Roman Emperor,’ who graciously received the Venetian envoys at Prag; and here in the midst of flag-waving and popular demonstrations these envoys of the great maritime Italian state knelt in public before the barbarian monarch, and in the Dom offered humbly in the name of the Doge the oath of fealty and received for him confirmation of the title of ‘Duke’ in respect of the Friuli and ‘all mainland Veneto *di qua dell’ Adda*.’

It is not my purpose to fill up in detail the sketches already given in the Historical Outline and the chapter on Milan of the long struggle that went on during the next dozen years and more. Impelled by its fatal lust for expansion Venice hired in the place of Carmagnola other *condottieri*, among whom were Gian Francesco Gonzaga, created by Sigismund the first Marchese of Mantua, and Gattamelata, and Francesco Sforza, who later went over to the enemy and changed sides so often that it is useless to try to follow his tergiversations. To put it shortly, after a series of wearisome campaigns (during which there were a few picturesque episodes, such as the celebrated transport of galleys overland from the Adige to the Lago di Garda, and a few important incidents, such as the incorporation of Ravenna <sup>1</sup> in the now immense mainland territory of Venice) fighting ceased for a time at the death of Filippo Maria; but it revived during the short existence of the Milanese Republic (1447–1450), whose side Venice took against the Sforza. When, however, the Sforza established himself

had shortly before crowned Sigismund at Rome as ‘Emperor.’ Florence too, though professedly a republic, showed its proclivities towards despotism by supporting the Pope against the Council of Basel, and granting him hospitality for about eight years (1434–1443).

<sup>1</sup> Involving the extinction of the ancient Polenta dynasty—known to us well on account of Dante. Ravenna was claimed by the Popes and annexed to the Papal States by Julius II in 1509.



## VENICE (1400-1500)

as Milanese Duke (1450) Venice had not the courage to attack so strong a foe, allied as he was with his friend Cosimo of Florence, and a tacit truce was followed in 1454 (a year after the capture of Constantinople) by the defensive *entente* initiated by Pope Nicholas V, who persuaded the chief Italian states to lay aside their feuds and combine against the infidel.

Before passing on to the episode that lends a pathetic interest to the last years of the long reign of Francesco Foscari it will be well to notice here, once more, how the pitiable squabbles of Christian nations—the French and English and Hussite wars, the German, and later the French and Spanish invasions of Italy, and still more the internal feuds among Italian states—opened the floodgates to the Turkish deluge. Venice, though later she made a most heroic stand, had begun badly by helping to overthrow, in the so-called Fourth Crusade, the Byzantine bulwark against the infidel, and her extermination of Genoese sea-power, as Genoa herself had exterminated that of Pisa, made impossible the formation of a great confederate Italian fleet which would have effectually barred the progress of the Turks on the Mediterranean. And it must be allowed that at times she acted ignobly—as when she made a secret pact with Mohammed II, and paid him tribute in order to save her Levantine empire; but it was the rivalries of Italian cities and despots which, forcing her to face the foe almost alone, induced her to act thus; and certainly no other Italian city or state came forward as courageously as she did at moments of supreme peril.

### THE TWO FOSCARI

Even at the election of Francesco Foscari there had been sinister rumours of corruption, and ten years later (1433) 37 nobles had been punished—some of them by exile—for attempting to influence the Maggior Consiglio by a carefully devised system of bribery. Some ten years later, again, the Doge's son, Jacopo, a gay young fellow, was accused of accepting bribes and undertaking to influence his father. He evaded trial by escaping to Trieste, but on the evidence of papers and

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

presents found in a box in the Foscari Palace a sentence of banishment to Nauplia (in the Morea) was passed. However, he seems to have been allowed to remain at Trieste, and then, on the plea of ill-health, to remove to Treviso, and finally, on the ground that the Doge 'should not be worried lest it might be prejudicial to the State,' he was permitted to return to Venice, where he was quiescent for three years. But in 1450 one of the Ten, his former judges, was murdered, and in consequence of an anonymous accusation, thrown into the *Bocca di leone*, and the testimony of certain menials, Jacopo was subjected to *quaestio* ('inquiry'—*i.e.* torture). When this had no result the Ten most unjustly, it would seem, decided that 'his guilt was indubitable although torture had failed to wring the truth from him.' He was again banished—this time to Crete (Candia). Here he was soon accused of corresponding with the Turks and with Duke Francesco Sforza, begging them to help him to escape; and he was brought back to Venice to stand trial. He did not deny the charge, and opinion was much divided on the heinousness of the deed. Virulent adversaries of the Foscari urged execution 'between the columns'; but finally re-exportation to Crete was the verdict of the Ten. Then with passionate words the young man appealed to his father to save him from an exile worse than death; but the Doge, though infirm with age and broken down by his grief, sternly bade him obey the laws of his country—'and turning to leave his son,' says the diarist Sanudo, 'he swooned away [*tramorti*].'

Popular feeling was evidently on the side of the Doge, and a movement for the recall of his son would probably have succeeded; but Jacopo died.<sup>1</sup> Hereupon, overwhelmed with his sorrow, the old Doge (now 84 years of age) retired almost entirely from public life and no longer attended the Councils; and, perhaps not unreasonably, it was demanded of him that

<sup>1</sup> In Byron's play, for sake of the Unities, he dies just as he is leaving the shore, after parting from his father, whose abdication and death supervene rapidly. They really took place 19 months after Jacopo's death in Candia, and that occurred some three years after the parting.

## VENICE (1400-1500)

he should abdicate. This he refused to do, asserting that the demand was illegal,<sup>1</sup> but the Ten insisted, giving him eight days for reflexion. The scene of his final submission—how he removed the ducal cap from his head and the ring of Adria from his finger and tottered feebly but proudly down the stairs which he had ascended to assume the insignia of office, and how, soon after, he died of a broken heart—has been told in pathetic words by historians and by poets.

That his death occurred, with dramatic propriety, on the very day of his abdication and while the great bell was announcing the election of his successor, if not quite true, seems to be not far from the truth; for it is said that his decease was reported to the new Doge two days after his election, while he was attending High Mass at St. Mark's. Foscari died, say chroniclers, in his palace 'near S. Pantaleone'—in that palace at the bend of the Grand Canal which gives its name to the Rio Cà Foscari. A splendid funeral (at which in Byron's play Jacopo's widow so disdainfully mocks) and a sumptuous Gothic monument in the Frari church were evidences of how little the Venetians were capable of understanding the nobler qualities of one of the greatest of their Doges.

\* \* \* \* \*

We have seen in what painful dilemma Venice found herself about this time. Compelled to bear, almost alone, the main brunt of the Turkish advance, she had made a pact with the infidel soon after the fall of Constantinople, but almost at the same time she had signed the Treaty of Lodi (1454-1455) which combined her with other Italian states against the Turk. Now by defiance, now by conciliation, she tried to save herself. In 1464, alone of all Christian states, she responded to the fervent appeals of Pope Pius II, who vainly

<sup>1</sup> In the *promissione* at coronation the Doges, since Marco Cornaro (1365), undertook to abdicate within three days if required to do so by *all six Consiglieri ducali* and by a majority of the *Maggior Consiglio*. The Ten had, it appears, no authority to demand abdication of Foscari. This is a point made in Byron's play, where Foscari insists on the right of the *people* and then exclaims, '*People! there is no people! . . . There's a populace.*'

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

attempted to launch a Crusade from Ancona. Between 1460 and 1479 Euboea and Scutari and other of her important colonial possessions were lost; the Friuli was invaded, and Venice herself was seriously threatened.<sup>1</sup> In 1479 a precarious peace was secured by the humiliating cession of the Morea, and in the next year, in their desperation, the Venetian Government, it is said, even tried to divert ruin by inducing Mohammed II to attack South Italy and to occupy Otranto. But all was useless.<sup>2</sup> The decline of Venice from its meridian of glory as the greatest maritime state of Europe had begun, and, as we have seen, several other influences besides that of the Turkish peril—such as the discovery of new worlds and new trade routes and the rise of great naval Powers—contributed to a result which was inevitable though long deferred by immense resources and splendid vitality.

### CATERINA CORNARO

An event which to some small extent helped to defer this destined obscuration was the acquisition of Cyprus—an acquisition perhaps more interesting than creditable.

Cyprus had been ruled since 1190 by Lusignan kings, so called from their home, a district in France south-west of Poitiers. The first of them, Hugo, ceded his title of King of Jerusalem to Richard Cœur-de-Lion, and accepted in exchange the kingdom of Cyprus.<sup>3</sup> Now about the year 1450 John II, Lusignan king, dies, and is succeeded by his daughter Carlotta. She banishes her bastard brother Giacomo (James). But he, aided by the Sultan of Egypt, returns and expels her. The Venetians, spying an opportunity, support his cause, and on his request, or perhaps without any such request, select for

<sup>1</sup> During this period (until 1475) Bart. Colleoni was the general of the Venetian land forces. See Fig. 24 and Notes to Illustrations.

<sup>2</sup> As in earlier days intestine feuds had prevented federation against the German peril so at this crisis all kinds of squabbles and land-grabbings caused the Italian states to rend each other while the Turk was at the gate. The disgraceful attack on the Estensi (Ferrara) made by Venice and Pope Sixtus IV about this time (1484) is recounted elsewhere (p. 243).

<sup>3</sup> The Palazzo Loredan in Venice (see *Medieval Italy*, Fig. 56 and p. xxvi) was in 1363 and 1366 the residence of Peter, Lusignan king of Cyprus.



## VENICE (1400-1500)

him a Venetian bride. The young lady chosen by the Signoria was Caterina, daughter of Marco Cornaro, whose ancestor and namesake had been Doge about a century before, and who held much of the island of Cyprus in mortgage. She was as yet a maiden of 14 years, and after the Doge, Cristoforo Moro, had placed on her finger the betrothal ring bought by the proxy of 'King' Giacomo she returned to her home until 1472, when she was sent to Cyprus with an escort of Venetian galleys. But ere long Giacomo died, and the partisans of the fugitive Carlotta, who was now residing at Rome,<sup>1</sup> incited a rising in her favour.

Thereupon Venice interfered. Pietro Mocenigo (soon afterwards Doge) was sent to suppress the movement, and he was followed by Marco Cornaro, Caterina's father. Having 'pacified' Cyprus the Venetians undertook to rule it. Pressure was brought on Queen Caterina through her father and her brother, and at last, after a dozen years, she found it necessary to yield. At Venice in the year 1489, in the midst of a magnificent ceremonial, she made a public and solemn donation of the island to the Venetian State. Then she withdrew to Asolo—a townlet (well known through Browning) some 30 miles north-west of Venice, perched on a ridge where the hills descend towards the plain of Treviso. Here the 'Queen of Cyprus, Jerusalem, and Armenia, and the Lady of Asolo,' as she called herself, lived till shortly before her death, devoting herself to literature and art and charity. Here she entertained Isabella d'Este, when that 'lady of the Renaissance' in the fateful year of 1493 came from Mantua to visit Venice (p. 363). In 1508 the hostilities caused by the League of Cambrai forced her to leave her home and seek refuge in Venice, where in 1509 she died. She was first buried in SS. Apostoli, where are tombs of others of the Cornaro family; but later her monument was erected in San Salvatore.

\* \* \* \* \*

The connexion of the Venetian Government (which, be it remembered, was by no means representative of what was

<sup>1</sup> Sixtus IV gave her a house in the Borgo and a pension. She died in 1487.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

great and noble in Venice) with the disastrous events of the last decade of the century—the invasions of Charles VIII and Louis XII and all that resulted therefrom—has been indicated in the Historical Outline, and mentioned frequently in the chapters on Milan, Rome, and Naples. The part that this Government often played is painful to every one who loves Venice and her art, and it is a relief to turn for a few moments from what is called her 'history' to memorials, such as still survive in chronicles, of great or interesting personalities, and to note in Venetian art the expression of something higher than the lust for wealth and empire, something that has for our age far greater importance. The Quattrocento architecture and painting of Venice will occupy us more fully on a future occasion, but here it may be helpful to say just a few words on the subject in order to show how the chronology of Venetian art fits in with the chronology of Doges and political events.

Firstly, as regards architecture, it has been explained in an earlier chapter that, mainly on account of the insularity of Venice and its relations with the East, the various styles known as Romanesque, Gothic, and Renaissance were introduced late, overlapped very considerably, and were so assimilated and modified that they assumed a character of their own. It will be remembered that in Florence the Renaissance style may be considered to have originated in 1425—the year in which Brunelleschi began to rebuild S. Lorenzo and Ghiberti designed his second bronze door for the Baptistery. In Venice the first appearance of the new style in architecture <sup>1</sup> dates from about the middle of Doge Foscari's reign (say, 1440). Until then, and for some time longer, we find prevalent the beautiful later Venetian-Gothic—of which the typical form was that which used the well-known 'Doges' Palace tracery.' The western (Piazzetta) front of the Doges' Palace, copied from the much earlier south front, in which this tracery <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In sculpture it appeared somewhat earlier. Of this the finest example is the beautiful transition Gothic-Renaissance tomb of Foscari's predecessor, Tommaso Mocenigo, who died in 1423. See Fig. 36 (a).

<sup>2</sup> The great windows of the upper storey until 1557 consisted each of three pointed windows with 'loggia' tracery. See Fig. 8.

## VENICE (1400-1500)

was first used, dates from *c.* 1424-1442, and at least 20 fine palaces on the Grand Canal, dating from *c.* 1420 to 1460, are built in this style—*e.g.* the Cà d'oro (built *c.* 1425-1435, while the drama in which Carmagnola played a part was being enacted) and the Palazzo Foscari (of which Doge Foscari built the upper storey) and the three Palazzi Giustiniani (one of which is the Hotel d'Europa) and the Palazzo Pisani.

As one of the first faint indications of the Renaissance style in Venetian architecture we may take the very beautiful portal that leads to the Giants' Staircase—the so-called Porta della Carta (erected *c.* 1440). Then we have the early Renaissance style mixed with Gothic in S. Zaccaria (*c.* 1460), while S. Maria dei Miracoli (*c.* 1480) and the Scuola di S. Marco (before which the equestrian statue of Colleoni stands) are most interesting examples of the fully developed early Venetian Renaissance, both very Byzantine in their use of coloured marble exteriors. A little later—just about the time when Caterina Cornaro's donation of Cyprus to the Venetian State took place—the splendid Renaissance Court of the Doges' Palace, with its Giants' Stair,<sup>1</sup> was being begun (*c.* 1488). Then—when the grand Venetian-Renaissance style had been at length fully evolved—we have the magnificent buildings of Sansovino, such as the Libreria Vecchia and the Loggetta—destroyed lately by the fall of the Campanile, but rebuilt—and the impressive Cinquecento palaces <sup>2</sup> of the Grand Canal, such as the Vendramin and the Grimani.

Secondly, the characteristics of certain schools of painting and the personalities of some of the chief artists will occupy us later, but it may be useful to note here, as we have done in the case of architecture, how the lives of the Venetian Quattrocento painters fit in with the events already recorded in the present chapter.

<sup>1</sup> Sansovino's statues of Mars and Neptune, from which the Stair was afterwards named, date from about 1554.

<sup>2</sup> Impressive, all must allow; but perhaps Ruskin was right: perhaps even the master-works of Sansovino, although they made magnificent avenues and foregrounds, have no independent existence as works of art.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

The influence of Giotto and his followers, which extended itself from Florence to Padua and even to Naples, scarcely touched Venice. Probably Giottesque sobriety seemed austere and the lack of fervid colour seemed cold to the splendour-loving Venetians. Nor had they as yet any painters of their own to satisfy their needs. As in architecture, so in painting, Venice assimilated tardily and evolved slowly. Before the two brothers Bellini, who flourished towards the end of the Quattrocento and were the founders of the almost unrivalled school of Venetian painting, we hear only of foreign artists, such as the Umbrian Gentile da Fabriano and Pisanello of Verona, invited to Venice in order to glorify the Republic by decorating the Doges' Palace with frescos (destroyed by the fire of 1557), and of the three Vivarini of Murano, and of Crivelli—painters who were to a considerable extent adherents of Mantegna of Padua (1431-1506), as was also Jacopo, the father of the two Bellini. This Paduan-Venetian school, although strongly supported by the old Jacopo, who gave his daughter to Mantegna, was at length totally eclipsed by his two sons, Gentile and Giovanni Bellini. The triumph of the *scuola bellinesca* over the *mantegnesca* was doubtless greatly due to the use made by the Bellini of the new method of painting in oils which was, perhaps, introduced from Flanders into Venice by Antonello da Messina about 1473; for this new method was very favourable to the display of magnificence in the treatment of great festal and historical scenes, such as Gentile Bellini and Carpaccio loved to paint, and to the delicate tints and details, the luminous and profound colours and the striking contrasts by which portraits and religious pictures gained a fresh and irresistible charm—such as still so strongly attracts us in the Madonnas of Giovanni Bellini and in the works of his early successor, Cima da Conegliano.

The eras of these early painters are more easily rememberable when we connect them with certain historical events and personages. Thus we may bear in mind that Gentile Bellini was sent by the Venetian Government to Constantinople on the invitation of Mohammed II, and painted from life that





38. MADONNA AND CHILD, BY MANTEGNA



59. FEDERIGO DI MONTEFELTRO

## VENICE (1400-1500)

famous portrait of the conqueror of Christian Byzantium which, long a treasure of the Layard Collection at Venice and now in our National Gallery, bears the date 1480—the year in which Venice so meanly incited the Turks to take Otranto.<sup>1</sup> One may also remember that this portrait (Fig. 18) was seen by Isabella d'Este when she visited Venice in 1493.

The Bellini were contemporaries of Verrocchio and Andrea della Robbia, and were somewhat older than Botticelli and Perugino, and still a little older than Francia and Leonardo da Vinci, who settled at Milan, under Lodovico il Moro, in 1482, and in 1500 was at Venice.

Mantegna too, as the brother-in-law of the Bellini, is associated in one's mind both with Venice and with Isabella d'Este and her husband, Francesco Gonzaga of Mantua. He had come to Mantua from Padua in 1460—long before Isabella arrived there from Ferrara—indeed before she was born—during the reign of Francesco's grandfather, that Marquis Lodovico who married a Hohenzollern princess, and thus introduced into the Gonzaga family a tendency to develop humpbacks. When Isabella was betrothed to Francesco in 1480 (being then 9 years of age), Mantegna painted her portrait, and when she became Marchesa of Mantua he did splendid service for her husband, painting for him many wonderful and interesting pictures, among which are especially notable the magnificent *Triumphs of Julius Caesar*<sup>2</sup> and the *Madonna della Vittoria* (now in the Louvre), which was painted on the occasion of the, somewhat doubtful, victory that Francesco Gonzaga gained over the French king, Charles VIII, at Fornovo in 1495. Sad to say, the conduct of Isabella—so extolled as *the 'lady of the Renaissance'*—as also that of her precious husband, towards the old and faithful court painter was most

<sup>1</sup> It will be remembered that Otranto was evacuated by the Turks in the following year on account of Mohammed's death. It is related that in order to prove to Gentile that his painting of the execution of John the Baptist was incorrect anatomically Mohammed had a slave decapitated in the presence of the horrified artist.

<sup>2</sup> The canvases, much injured, are at Hampton Court. They were probably painted as decorations for the Mantuan court theatre.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

heartless. Indeed it is asserted that he died (1506) in destitution, and heart-broken.

But to return to the school which so effectually eclipsed the influence of Mantegna in Venice, it will be explained in the chapter on Quattrocento art how, near the end of the century, the technical methods of the Bellini were adopted and improved by a youthful, but a very great, artist, Giorgione, and how he introduced a new era by emancipating painting from the austerity and solemnity of religious (or rather ecclesiastical) medieval sentiment and by holding up a mirror to the age, reflecting its joyous love of life and liberty, its delight in human emotions and affections, and in all that is great or beautiful in nature and in art. With an ever wider treatment of these new themes Venetian painting in the next century passed from the still nobly self-restrained art of Giorgione to the splendours of Tiziano's genius, and thence to the dramatic and spectacular magnificence of the later Cinquecentisti.

Venice, like several other great Italian cities, though she hospitably fostered some great writers, has produced surprisingly little in great literature. But she promoted very considerably the cause of learning—if not of a great original literature—by favouring the newly invented art of printing. Early in the Cinquecento there had been printed at Venice, it is said, more books than at Rome, Milan, Florence, and Naples all together.<sup>1</sup> About 1470 Nicholas Jansen at Venice was issuing from his press a fine series of Latin classics and an Italian translation of the Bible. In 1490 the famous Aldus Romanus (Teobaldo Pio Manuzio of Rome) settled at Venice with the object of publishing, with the help of Byzantine scholars and compositors, the whole of the Greek classics. He published Latin and Italian master-works in a type that he first used in his edition of Virgil of 1501. This cursive

<sup>1</sup> Those printed during the first half-century (1450–1500) after the invention of moveable type (probably by Gutenberg) are called *incunabuli*—a curious word made up from the expression *in cunabulis* which was applied to the art in its infancy (cradle). The first Italian printing press was probably erected by the Benedictines at Subiaco.



## VENICE (1400-1500)

type (*carattere italico* or *aldo*) was modelled, it is said, by the painter Francia on the handwriting of the poet Petrarca. Aldus founded at Venice a kind of Academy, the 'Symposium of Humanists,' to which the Bellini and Mantegna and other artists belonged.

## CHAPTER VI

### LITERATURE (1400-1500)

#### (a) THE CLASSICAL REVIVAL

BESIDES the many writers who supply us with solid information concerning the various manifestations of the Renaissance—of that exceedingly complex movement that tended towards emancipation of the human spirit, towards freedom and originality and individuality, towards the acquisition of new realms of thought and feeling and knowledge,<sup>1</sup> and towards the reacquisition of all that is eternally beautiful and grand in ancient art and literature—there are also some who offer us little but their own lucubrations and theories respecting the origins, the nature, and the effects of this phenomenon. Such a method of treating the subject—useful enough in its way, and interesting to analytic minds—must here be dispensed with. We must limit ourselves to an unambitious record of a few of the facts, literary, artistic, and other, by means of which the new spirit manifested itself. And first let us consider what is called the Classical Revival.

This Classical Revival had two distinct results—a luxuriant but barren outgrowth of pedantic, imitative scholarship, and a new literature, full of vitality and procreative power. The mania for ‘classicism,’ although it persisted for a considerable period and blossomed out into almost incredible extravagances, finally faded and dropped out of sight, while classic perfection

<sup>1</sup> As for the discoveries and inventions of this period, I must content myself with reminding the reader that printing (with moveable type), invented probably by Gutenberg of Mainz, was introduced into Italy about 1464; the Cape was passed by Dias in 1487; Columbus sighted the New World in October 1492; Vasco de Gama reached India by the Cape route in 1498 (three days before Savonarola’s martyrdom).

## LITERATURE (1400-1500)

of form wedded to virile native genius, as Helen of Troy in the old legend is wedded to Faust, produced new forms of genuine Italian literature and art.<sup>1</sup>

Three periods are discernible in this revival of enthusiasm for the works of the great Greek and Roman writers, most of which had entirely disappeared, so to speak, under the rubbish and overgrowths of a thousand years, and under the vast and unsightly superstructures of medieval scholasticism. The first of these periods, extending from the days of Dante to about 1400, was that of love rather than of knowledge. Even during the dark medieval ages there had been those, such as Boëthius, who studied and loved the few classical authors then accessible in Italy; but Dante was the first real 'humanist,' in the higher sense of that word, seeing that he drew veritable inspiration for his great poem from the beauty and grandeur of ancient literature and philosophy.<sup>2</sup> The fine classical scholarship of Petrarca, his contempt for the schoolmen, his astonishing success in discovering and acquiring ancient manuscripts, his patronage of the uncleanly Greek teacher Leontios Pilatos—to whom, and to Boccaccio, Italy owed its first Latin version of Homer's poetry—all this has occupied us on a former occasion. Here it suffices to recall to mind the picture of Laura's lover poring with longing eyes over his beloved codez of Homer, of which he could understand scarce one word—for, as Mr. Symonds has well said, no better symbol than this picture can be found of the spirit of the first period of the Classical Revival.

We may place between 1400 and 1470 the second period—that of knowledge—of ever more eager codex-hunting, of

<sup>1</sup> Although ancient sculpture had inspired Italian art since the days of Niccolò Pisano, the great wave of enthusiasm for classic art did not arrive until towards the end of the Quattrocento, when Greek and Roman statues, and other antiquities, began to be discovered in considerable numbers.

<sup>2</sup> How he studied and loved Virgil he himself tells us. Horace, Ovid, Lucan, Statius, Livy, Cicero, Seneca he mentions as if he knew their works. Euripides, Simonides, and other Greek writers whom he names he may have known through Latin commentators or translators. The philosophy of Aristotle, *il maestro di color che sanno*, he knew probably through Latin translations of Averrhoes, *che il gran comento feo (fece)*, and through Albertus Magnus. For Plato see next section.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

libraries, of a wondrous facility in using the purest classical idiom for any purpose, even the most vituperative or obscene.

It was in Florence that 'humanism' first found a home. In 1397, some 30 years after the attempt of Petrarca and Boccaccio to start Pilatos there as a teacher of Greek, the University (*Lo Studio*) was refounded and the learned Chrysoloras was engaged as Greek professor. Even before this a friend of Petrarca's, Fra Luigi Marsili, used to hold classical reunions in the convent of S. Spirito, and amongst those who attended these meetings was Niccolò Niccoli, whose collection of valuable manuscripts, it will be remembered, formed the nucleus of the famous Medicean library founded by old Cosimo. Niccolò's liberality attracted to Florence many scholars. Of these perhaps Leonardo Bruni, Latin historian of Florence and translator into Latin of Xenophon and Polybius and of parts of Plato and Aristotle, and Poggio, the discoverer of many priceless manuscripts, are the most famous.<sup>1</sup> The study at Florence of Greek literature, especially of the works of Plato and Aristotle, received a great impulse from the visit of wise men from the East on the occasion of the Council of 1439, which has been described in Chapter IV; and this impulse was intensified by the arrival at Florence of Byzantine fugitives in and after 1453. One of the results of this aroused enthusiasm for Greek philosophy was, as we shall see, the so-called Florentine Platonic Academy with its group of brilliant scholars and poets.

At Rome, as we know already, Pope Nicholas V, who when

<sup>1</sup> Poggio discovered manuscripts of Lucretius, Cicero (*Verrine Orations*), Quintilian, Plautus, etc. The character of the man (and of many of his fellow-pedants) may be conceived from the fact that what impressed him most in the burning of John Huss (which he witnessed) was that 'even at the foot of the pyre he quoted Anaxagoras and Plato.' Poggio was occupied mostly at Rome. Other great codex-hunters were Chrysoloras, Guarino of Verona and Ferrara (the father of modern educators), Filelfo, one of the most foul-mouthed of those who disgraced the name of 'humanist,' and Aurispa, who scoured the towns and islands of the Near East and brought to Venice and Florence amongst other treasures over 200 Greek manuscripts, including works of Aeschylus and Sophocles now in the Laurentian Library. Bruni, secretary to several Popes, was the finest Latinist of the early Quattrocento. His tomb, a noble work by B. Rossellino, is in S. Croce.



## LITERATURE (1400-1500)

yet a young student had been engaged by Cosimo Vecchio to arrange and examine his newly purchased manuscripts, re-founded the Vatican Library and kept a large number of copyists and translators, and employed numerous scholars to hunt for manuscripts in Greece and other lands. The most famous of the 'humanists' at his court was perhaps Valla. This scholar had at first attached himself to Alfonso of Aragon and had accompanied him on his triumphal entry into Naples in 1442. From Naples he came to Rome; but he was a keen adversary of Eugenius IV, and when that Pope returned to Rome in 1444 he had to flee. Moreover, he professed the tenets of Epicurus and assailed fiercely the doctrines of asceticism, and although, of course, the papal court made no objection to this, when he turned the battery of his classical invectives against dogma and temporal power and exposed the 'Constantine Donation' as a forgery, he naturally excited the fiercest hostility in papal circles. A scholarly recantation, however, conciliated Pope Nicholas, in the service of whom and of Calixtus III Valla held high office. Then in the pontificates of the erudite Pius II (Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini), of Paul II, and of Sixtus IV we have the dramatic events, related in the chapter on Rome, connected with the revolt of the multitudinous scribes and translators employed at the Vatican, with the founding of the Roman Academy, and with the imprisonment of Platina and his subsequent elevation to the directorship of the Sistine Library. Under Innocent VIII and Alexander VI, as we may easily imagine, *literae humaniores* were not cultivated at Rome. Also at Naples during the reigns of Ladislaus and his sister, the ill-famed Joanna II, art and 'humanism' met with little favour. But the advent of the Aragonese conqueror, Alfonso I, caused a great change. His enthusiasm for antiquity was such that he paid reverence to the great Latin writers as if they were something almost superhuman, and in his later days, it is said, his perpetual haunt was his library. Besides the great Valla we hear of several famous scholars at Alfonso's court, among them Georgos of Trebizond, the younger Chrysoloras, and that

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

Panormita who in his loudly denounced but widely read *Hermaphroditus* seems to have surpassed even Filelfo in obscenity. Alfonso's son, Ferrante, and his successors were no great patrons of learning, and what little needs be said about them has been said already (p. 270).

A very liberal and discerning patron of *belle lettere* during this era was Frederic of Montefeltro, the famous *condottiere* who in 1474 was invested by Pope Sixtus IV as Duke of Urbino. Besides being a valiant warrior—not without reproach, perhaps, as regards humanity—he was a doughty ‘humanist,’ being especially strong, it is said, on Aristotelian philosophy, or what then passed for such, and expert in mathematics, theology, music, and architecture. The Urbino Library, founded by him, acquired great importance.<sup>1</sup> For 14 years about forty copyists were employed by him in various cities, and ‘all Duke Frederic’s books,’ says Vespasiano da Bisticci, the great Florentine biographer of that day, ‘were superlatively beautiful, every one written with the pen and most elegantly *miniato*, and not one of them printed; for he would have been ashamed to possess a printed book.’

At Milan the last of the Visconti (Filippo Maria) had classical works translated by his ‘humanists’ into the *volgare*, for which he had great admiration; and he himself annotated Petrarca. Lodovico il Moro was a scholar and an enthusiast for Latin literature as well as for contemporary art. At Ferrara the Estensi, who later (during the epoch of Lorenzo il Magnifico) befriended the poet Boiardo—and later again Ariosto, and then Tasso—during the earlier half of the Quattrocento patronized the scholar Guarino of Verona, a very noble-minded man, who, as already mentioned, was in earlier life a great codex-collector.<sup>2</sup> At Ferrara was founded by Guarino the first important school of modern Europe, a school in which were trained Duke Ercole and his brothers, and that

<sup>1</sup> Mentioned in the *Cortegiano*. See Part III, Chap. VI. The library was plundered by Caesar Borgia, and many of the manuscripts, ‘conveyed’ by Popes, are now in the Vatican Library.

<sup>2</sup> His hair, it is said, turned white with anxiety when a ship carrying his manuscripts was wrecked.

## LITERATURE (1400-1500)

other great teacher, Vittorino of Feltre—a character no less noble than his master. Vittorino was called to Mantua by the first Marquis and established there his celebrated academy called *La Casa Gioiosa*,<sup>1</sup> in which were educated several of the Gonzaga and that Frederic of Montefeltro whose learning and liberality have been mentioned and whom Villari describes as ‘the only *condottiere* who never broke his word of honour.’

The third period of the Classical Revival may be considered to coincide with the rule of Lorenzo the Magnificent (1469-92), when scholarship rose in some cases into the higher realm of poetic and philosophic appreciation, and in one case at least, that of Poliziano, Latin poetry was produced which had a life of its own. On the other hand pedantry, balked of its prey by the diffusion of printed editions and explanations of the classics, fell more and more into general contempt, and the ‘humanist’ of the Cinquecento was not seldom a parasite who made use of his scholarship mainly for the purpose of fulsome flattery, scurrilous abuse, or obscenity.

Before leaving the subject of the Classical Revival it may be *à propos* to say a few words—applicable to the whole subject of the Renaissance—about ‘Culture’ viewed from the ethical standpoint. In mere scholarship one expects nothing ethical. The scholarship of the eminently respectable Guarino and that of the disgustingly obscene Panormita were much on a par, and their literary theories coincided to so large an extent that Guarino warmly approved of the *Hermaphroditus*, although he was a model husband and father. This is not astonishing; for mere scholarship is a thing of the intellect, not of the heart. But that men whose spirit could be so deeply moved by the loveliness and grandeur of art and the sublime teachings of ancient philosophy should have abandoned themselves, as

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps so called because of the happiness prevalent in the school; but Villari points out that the original name was *Zoiosa* (however, G and Z are much interchanged and *Zoiosa* may be a dialect form of *Gioiosa*). The system was that of *mens sana in corpore sano*. He educated the poor gratuitously. A contemporary writer describes him as ‘short and small and always laughing . . . clad in a coat of dark stuff with tails that reached the ground, and bearing on his head a little pointed hood.’

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

Villari says, to the most atrocious crimes and the lowest forms of vice—this is difficult to explain; nor is it very helpful to refer one for explanation to the Age—that age which produced Beatrice d'Este as well as Caesar Borgia—or to point out that the impulse towards emancipation and individuality, especially where it was hemmed in its course by despotism, was bound to result in violence, libertinism, and crime. Instead, therefore, of attempting to discover causes in social and political phenomena, I merely note the fact that the most exquisite sensibility to the beauty and the grandeur of art and literature in many cases coexisted with what seems like an almost total moral insensibility. To take one or two examples—while Perugino and the young Raphael were painting their divinely gracious Madonnas and saints at Perugia, 'the city,' says an old chronicler, 'witnessed daily acts of bloodshed, and in the devastated country prowling wolves were feeding on Christian flesh.' And at Rimini under the art-loving Sigismund Malatesta—at Ferrara, the home of Boiardo and Ariosto—at Rome in the days of Sixtus IV and Alexander VI—do we not find contrasts still more perplexing? And what are we to say to the lives of some of the great artists? Is it possible that dear old Guarino was right when, to explain his rather surprising approval of the obscene work of Panormita, he affirmed—as some still affirm—that 'the scope of life is one and the scope of art is another'?

### (b) THE 'PLATONIC ACADEMY'

Although the philosophic and literary productions of the Florentine Platonic Academy were trivial, it is itself interesting, because in connexion with it we hear much of several literary celebrities, and because it was a result of certain important influences which also wrought notable changes in the general view of life and the functions of art and literature. One of these influences was, of course, the charm exercised on scholars by the exquisite style of Plato. But Plato is not only a great stylist; he is a great thinker; and the renewed study of his



## LITERATURE (1400-1500)

*Dialogues*—which for more than ten centuries had been obscured by the fantastic overgrowths of Neoplatonism—had of late awakened in thoughtful minds the hope that here at last<sup>1</sup> might be found (what was not to be found in Aristotle) something that would contribute to form a common basis for Christian and Hellenic conceptions of virtue, of the human soul, and of the Deity, and would afford some helpful intellectual explanation of certain ethical principles and ideals proclaimed as with divine authority by the Founder of Christianity.

It is indeed not surprising that amidst such a state of things as is mirrored in Savonarola's sermons and in contemporary chronicles many earnest-minded men turned with disgust from the abominations of Rome and from the licentiousness, the inhumanity, the religious indifference, and the atheism prevalent on all sides towards a philosophy which seemed far more consonant with the teaching of Christ than was the so-called Christianity that they saw around them.<sup>2</sup>

We have seen (pp. 311-12) that the Florentine 'Platonic Academy' was founded by Cosimo, and that his interest in Plato's philosophy was first aroused by a learned Greek, Gemisthos Plethon, who accompanied the Emperor and the Patriarch of Constantinople to Florence on the occasion of the famous Council of 1439. Plethon had written a Latin treatise

<sup>1</sup> Some early Neoplatonists (*e.g.* Porphyry) had attempted to substitute Platonism in the place of Christianity. Others accepted Plato as an 'Attic-speaking Moses' and a forerunner of Christ. The false Platonism of Plotinus, the founder of the sect, distinctly favoured medieval asceticism.

<sup>2</sup> We have no reason to doubt Savonarola's assertion that Alexander VI was an atheist, even if he did not openly profess atheism, as did several medieval Popes. Villari, combating the assertion that Italians have always been indifferent to real religion, after naming St. Francis and various Popes, says: *L'indifferenza cominciò fra di noi coll' Umanismo e col Rinascimento.* Machiavelli in his *Discorsi* (i, xii) agrees for once with Savonarola in asserting that 'those who are nearest Rome are just those who believe least in Christianity. . . . With the Church and the priests we Italians have become without religion and depraved.' As for superstitions—to say nothing of the Church—'almost every republic, prince, and *condottiere* had an astrologer' (Villari). Even the bold thinker Machiavelli believed in 'spirits of the air.'

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

on 'The Difference between Platonic and Aristotelian Philosophy'—a boundless subject, which an ordinary mortal can only hope to view in a few of its countless aspects.<sup>1</sup> For Plethon the essential difference consisted in this, that according to Aristotle nature acts indeed towards certain ends (not fortuitously) but with no conscious will (*non consulto agit*), whereas Plato intimates the existence of will and design in the natural world. This 'higher Pantheism' by which will, spirit, Deity was recognized as omnipresent in nature, was hailed with enthusiasm by many as an emancipation from the theology of the schools and from the doctrines of a Church which assigned a supernatural sanctity to certain persons, places, things, and ceremonies. And it was the endeavour of the really earnest-minded members of the Platonic Academy, as some thousand years before it had been the endeavour of the saner Alexandrine Neoplatonists, to harmonize the philosophy of Plato with the teachings of Christ and the fundamental dogmas of the Church—such as that concerning the 'Trinity in Unity.'<sup>2</sup>

The young medical student of Figline, Marsilio Ficino, who in 1450 yielded to Cosimo's suggestion that he was 'born to doctor men's minds, not their bodies,' was installed in the Medici Palace, and after five years' study, when about 23 years of age, wrote a treatise on Platonic philosophy which earned considerable applause; but Cosimo was dissatisfied, seeing that his *protégé* had drawn inspiration solely from translations and commentators. The youth therefore set to work at Greek and

<sup>1</sup> Besides Latin translations of portions of Plato, and besides Neoplatonic writings, there was an early Latin version of the *Timaeus* by Chalcidius, evidently known to Dante (*Par.* iv, 49) and to Ficino. It was printed in 1520. Ficino's was probably the first fairly complete Latin version—certainly the first printed translation. Aristotle was much better known in the Middle Ages. The schoolmen, who drew from Latin versions of the Arabian commentator Averrhoes, accepted Aristotelian philosophy as the metaphysical system by which they forced Christian dogma on the intellect. Albertus Magnus of Cologne (*d.* 1280), called the 'Ape of Aristotle,' refuted the interpretations of Averrhoes and made it his one object to harmonize Plato and Aristotle. From him, and Thomas Aquinas, Dante drew most of his scholastic Aristotelianism (see *Par.* x, 98).

<sup>2</sup> Plato was influenced by the mystic theories of Pythagoras about the Monad and Triad, and these theories struck the fancy of Christian Platonists.

## LITERATURE (1400-1500)

tackled the original *Dialogues*; and during the rest of his life (that is, till 1499) he devoted himself almost exclusively to Platonism and to his great work, *Theologia Platonica*, leading a retired existence in a *villetta* near Careggi given him by Cosimo, or in his Florentine house, a gift of Lorenzo. The Academy began with readings and lectures given by Ficino in his *villetta* for the benefit of Cosimo and his sons. Then a few literary men were admitted, among whom were the philosophic scholar Landino and the universal genius Alberti. Later the two most distinguished members were Pico della Mirandola and Poliziano. But, however great in other respects some of these Academicians were,<sup>1</sup> none except Ficino seems to have attained any true understanding of the Platonic philosophy, and of course Lorenzo regarded it all merely as an elegant literary pastime.



PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA

To judge from the descriptions that Landino and Ficino give us of the discussions, there was little but a display of rhetoric, epigram, well-turned phrases, classical quotations, and the jargon of the schools. The meetings were held in summer at Camaldoli, under mighty forest-pines or in the great hall of the convent—now the Sala of the Grande Albergo. On other occasions, the greatest of which was

<sup>1</sup> Landino is well known through his Platonic Commentary on Dante, which shows great learning and zeal but no real understanding of Plato. He was presented by the Florentine Republic with a house at Borgo alla Collina (Casentino), where he died in 1504, and where his mummy is still to be seen. For Alberti and Poliziano see later. Pico, called 'the Phoenix' on account of his immense erudition (and in allusion to the word *picus*), knew, they say, 22 languages. But he was a prodigy rather than a genius. He preferred Lorenzo's lyrics to those of Dante and Petrarca and fancied he had found in the Cabbala the one central principle of all philosophy.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

November 7, the traditional date of Plato's birth and death, a banquet and discourse took place at Careggi or in Florence. In his *Disputationes Camaldulenses* Landino pictures one of the Casentino meetings held amidst a scene of overarching boughs and sparkling fountains not unlike that amidst which in Plato's *Phaedrus* Socrates and his disciples meet on the bank of the Ilissus. On this occasion Alberti held a long discourse to prove that all Platonism and most of Christianity are to be found in Virgil's *Aeneid*. One of the anniversary banquets held in Lorenzo's villa at Careggi in 1474 is minutely described by Ficino. The subject of discussion was Plato's *Symposium* ('Banquet'), and the poetic fancies of Aristophanes, the wondrous doctrines of the priestess Diotima, and the fine discourse of Alcibiades, related by Plato, led to what one can with justice call an orgy of fantastic nonsense. Four years after this the Pazzi conspiracy put an end for a time to the reunions. They were resumed in a modest way by Ficino, but were much interrupted during Savonarola's ascendancy. Pico and Poliziano died in the fatal year 1494, and after Ficino's death in 1499 the Platonic Academy ceased to exist. Its name was revived, but the meetings, held in the Oricellari gardens (later the property of Bianca Cappello) were mainly for political, often for revolutionary, purposes. Machiavelli sometimes attended them.

### (c) THE NEW ITALIAN LITERATURE

Regarded as an expression of the higher life of a people, literature, as also art, is a subject of importance for the historian. It must, however, be treated from a standpoint other than that of the literary annalist or critic. As in the case of the Trecento I shall now, after a few remarks on the rise of the new Italian literature, select certain writers, and, having shown how they are connected with the political events of the period, shall try to point out the value of their works.

It will be remembered that the appearance of the *Deca-*



## LITERATURE (1400-1500)

*merone* in 1373 was followed by a barren interval, in which very little worth notice was produced except Sacchetti's novels and the letters of Sta Caterina. During the first half of the Quattrocento, as we have seen, the rise of an enthusiasm for Latin and Greek authors almost entirely submerged indigenous literature. But here and there amid this flood still stood native growths. The more vigorous of these, striking deep root in the rich alluvial deposit of classicism, in due time, as the waters subsided, lifted themselves aloft and burst into splendid flower.

The native literature of this *pre-Renaissance* period (say 1373-1430) was of four kinds. (1) Firstly we find weak imitations of Boccaccio and Petrarca, which ere long died away. (2) Secondly there was coarse popular burlesque, which once more, as in ancient Greece and Rome, led up to something great in the way of Comedy. The first who made a real literary use of this vein was Luigi Pulci, 'the sire of the half-serious rhyme'—as Byron calls him—whom we shall consider later; but some 40 years before Pulci wrote his *Morgante* the ribald 'tailed sonnets' of a Florentine barber—a kind of Florentine Pasquino—Domenico di Giovanni, nicknamed Il Burchiello ('the haphazard rimester'), won immense popularity; but for us they are often a mere farrago of nonsense on account of unintelligible allusions and words, and sometimes even when the words are intelligible they are heaped together haphazard like, the ravings of a lunatic. Domenico was a partisan of the Albizzi and had to escape from Florence when Cosimo was recalled in 1434. (3) Thirdly, there were popular love-ditties, many in the form of what are called *rispetti* (courtships) or *strambotti*—pieces composed of eight-lined or shorter stanzas, which were sung to the lute, sometimes alternately by men and women. Some of these love-songs, of which there was a vast number, were weakly sentimental; others were rough, strong-flavoured, sometimes obscene. Something of what Burns did for Scotland was done for Italy by Leonardo of the noble Venetian family of the Giustiniani, who lifted the crude, uncouth, bucolic erotics into an atmosphere

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

—not of literary elegance, but of true poetry.<sup>1</sup> He was a musician as well as a poet, and his *Odi* and *Canzonette*, set to his music and known as *Giustiniane* or *Veneziane*, spread through all Italy. The love and ballad literature of this period was a fount from which Lorenzo de' Medici drew largely—and, as we shall see, he did not always choose wells of water undefiled, nor did he shrink from further pollution. (4) Lastly, the long-lived influence of the old French romantic poetry (Charlemagne legends and others) was still strong in the north of Italy. In Tuscany the result generally took the form of verse in *ottava rima*—the old eight-lined ballad-stanza with three rimes, first introduced into literature by Boccaccio, and by this time very largely used (e.g. in the *rispetti*). These legendary subjects, treated in the burlesque *alla burchia* style mentioned above, form the staple of the new 'half-serious' epic literature of which Pulci's *Morgante*, Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato* and (later) Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* were brilliant examples.<sup>2</sup>

### LEON BATTISTA ALBERTI

The writers that I shall take as representative of the literature of the *Early Renaissance* (about 1430 to 1500) are Alberti, Pulci and Boiardo, Poliziano and Lorenzo.

Alberti (c. 1404-72), of noble Florentine parentage, was

<sup>1</sup> It shows great indifference to what is true in poetry that his poems are so little known. D'Ancona gives 27 *strambotti* in his *Poesia popolare* (1906). Even such a fragment as the following shows an air—almost Greek in its simplicity and its beauty—which is as immeasurably removed from the tiresome fluency and literary elegance of Lorenzo's erotics and bucolics as from most of the early *poesia popolare*.

Non ti ricordi quando mi dicevi  
Che tu m'amavi sì perfettamente ?  
Se stavi un giorno che non mi vedevi  
Con li occhi mi cercavi fra la gente,  
E riguardando s'tu non mi vedevi  
Dentro de lo tuo cor stavi dolente.  
E mo' mi vedi, e par non mi conosci,  
Come tuo servo stato mai non fossi !

<sup>2</sup> For Pulci's *Morgante* see later remarks on Boiardo.

## LITERATURE (1400-1500)

born at Genoa (or Venice), where the family was living in exile. He studied at Padua and Bologna, and, after extensive travels, accompanied the Patriarch of Grado to Rome, where he became secretary to Eugenius IV. He returned to Florence when Eugenius fled thither in 1434—the same year in which also Cosimo was recalled from exile at Venice. At Florence he remained until, in 1443, Eugenius returned to Rome, and during these nine years of Cosimo's rule and the Pope's sojourn Alberti wrote his chief works and evidently took an important part in the many intellectual interests that prevailed at that period—the period of the famous Council and the visit of the Byzantine Emperor and Patriarch. We find, for instance, that in 1442, on his proposal, a literary tournament, the so-called *Certame coronario*, took place, on which occasion he himself competed;<sup>1</sup> and being of immense energy and many ambitions, and finding himself in the midst of many men of genius, he became not only an accomplished painter,<sup>2</sup> sculptor, musician, dancer, athlete, rider, ball-player, mathematician, and inventor of strange machines (like Leonardo da Vinci), but also a very eminent architect. While still in Florence, or soon after, he designed the Rucellai Palace, and after settling in Rome, whither he returned with Pope Eugenius, he evidently came north again on numerous occasions, for in 1446 was begun, after his designs, the great 'Temple of the Malatesta' at Rimini, and in 1456 the façade of the Florentine S. Maria Novella, and about 1471 the wondrous S. Andrea at Mantua, while, as we have seen, he was present at a meeting of Cosimo's 'Platonic Academy' at Camaldoli, which probably took place in 1468. He died at Rome in 1472, having lived there nearly continuously under six Popes.<sup>3</sup>

Having thus seen how Alberti's life fits in with certain

<sup>1</sup> With the fourth book of his *Della Famiglia*. Competitors being equal the wreath was adjudged to S. Maria del Fiore, in whose church (the Duomo) the competition took place.

<sup>2</sup> Vasari speaks disparagingly of his pictures.

<sup>3</sup> For Nicholas V he is said (by Vasari) to have designed the original Fontana di Trevi. Alberti was among the scholars and artists summarily dismissed from Vatican service by Paul II (p. 239).

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

historical events and personages, let us pause a few moments to consider a book written by him in Italian which is of very much more importance than all his Latin tractates (however interesting these may be) on law and painting and architecture, and certainly not less important, regarded at least as an influence, than his buildings. This book is the *Della Famiglia*, in which we find, for the first time, a living bud thrusting itself forth from the dry husks of pedantic classical erudition—like some early flower on a bare Alpine slope. As a youth Alberti was an ardent Latin scholar, given to satire, to canon law, and to contempt of the vulgar tongue; but residence in Florence seems to have soon awakened in him an intense admiration for the great Trecentisti—especially for Dante, Petrarca, and Boccaccio. Henceforth he strongly advocated the employment of Italian even for the highest subjects, and was the first of the Quattrocento ‘humanists’ who saw in what consists the real value of the classics—namely *not* in the fact that they offer models for pedantic imitation, but in the inspiration, the sense of form, the arrowy directness, the self-restrained power, and the contempt for verbiage and affectation which they confer on the writer of another age and another tongue.

The scheme of the *Della Famiglia* resembles that of a Platonic *Dialogue*, and its unaffected style recalls Xenophon, but it seems directly suggested by Cicero’s *De Senectute* and *De Amicitia*—indeed the venerable Giannozzo Alberti on Old Age reminds one strongly of Cicero’s Cato on the same subject, and the title of the last book is *Dell’ Amicizia*. The scene is Padua, whither the old and exiled, and now dying, Lorenzo Alberti has sent for his brother, Ricciardo, in order to entrust to him his two young sons—one being Leon Battista himself. Ricciardo’s arrival is delayed, but Lorenzo and others of the family talk together in the presence of the two boys, the main subject being how best to build up and preserve a family such as that of the Alberti—*i nostri Alberti*—who evidently held together amidst their misfortunes very bravely and affectionately. The first book discusses the mutual duties of young and old; the second, which treats of choosing a wife

380



## LITERATURE (1400-1500)

and of her necessary accomplishments and qualities—her Griselda-like patience and her submissive deference to her solemn and priggish lord and master—would raise a smile on the faces of modern readers; but it is interesting because it shows with what real respect and affection women were sometimes regarded in this age.

The third book and its preface form perhaps the most important portion of the volume.<sup>1</sup> The subject of discussion is, like that of Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*, the father of a family—his duties and necessary qualifications. The preface is, however, for us even more interesting than this picture of the respectable Quattrocento *paterfamilias*. It treats, very shortly, the same subject as that of Dante's *De vulgari Eloquentia*; but it differs widely from Dante's erudite examination of sources and dialects. Moreover, Alberti's mistaken view of *volgare* as merely Low Latin corrupted by barbarian influences seems to give away his arguments in its favour and to justify the contempt in which it was held by humanists. But nevertheless he makes a very gallant assault on pedantry. He very rightly pours scorn on the notion that the Romans and Greeks used a 'learned' language, or wrote for 'scholars.' What dead 'classical' languages did their poets and orators study? And for whom did they write? Was it not for their own fellow-countrymen? And was it for a few *letterati*, or for the benefit of many? If the ancients used their *volgare* surely we should use ours. 'I do not see why *la nostra oggi toscana* should be so despised. If only we took pains to improve it we might produce as great works in our Italian as the ancients did in their languages.'

Alberti was great not only intellectually. As he possessed the rare gift of making a true use of scholarship, so also he had the equally rare power of realizing the teachings of philosophy in

<sup>1</sup> In 1734 an ancient manuscript was printed of a treatise called *Del Governo della Famiglia*, attributed to Pandolfini, a contemporary of Alberti. Not till 1850 was it discovered that this was an 'improved' version of the third book of Alberti's *Della Famiglia* which until then had never been printed. Probably Pandolfini had 'written up' his version to suit the taste of 'literary' readers.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

character and conduct. Not only do his writings abound in maxims of noble tenor, nor only did he sum up his philosophical convictions in a fine treatise (*Della Tranquillità*), in which he asserts that true happiness consists in joyous, free, and contented equanimity; he is said also to have conquered entirely his very excitable and irascible temper and to have become a striking example of a well-balanced, happy, and lovable human being—perhaps the most satisfactory of all the highly gifted men of early Renaissance days.

### PULCI AND BOIARDO

We have already met Luigi Pulci, for it was he who, perhaps in concert with Luca, one of his two literary brothers, wrote the *Stanze* for Lorenzo's Giostra (tournament) in 1468. These *Stanze* are depressingly dull and of no poetic value, but they possess a literary interest, for they may have suggested the *Stanze* of Poliziano. Luigi Pulci was employed in Medici service and was favoured by the friendship of Lorenzo. His letters show him to have been an impulsive, witty, and somewhat eccentric character. His chief work was the *Morgante Maggiore*,<sup>1</sup> which, it is said, he was encouraged to write by Lorenzo's mother, Lucrezia Tornabuoni, herself a verse-writer, but in a very different line. The value of the *Morgante* as poetic literature is, of course, estimated very diversely. Pulci's word-mastery, his power of vivid delineation, his dramatic dialogue, and the individuality of his characters cannot be denied; and in any case, from the mere literary point of view the poem is important as the precursor of the *Orlandos* of Boiardo and of Ariosto—to say nothing of Berni's burlesques, and Byron's *Don Juan*.

As already stated, old French epics (mainly *Gestes* and adventures of Charlemagne and his paladins) had retained for centuries their popularity in Northern Italy, and in Tuscany

<sup>1</sup> So called to distinguish it from the 'Morgante and Margutte' episode (273 stanzas), which was published separately under the title *Morgante Minore*. It is the first canto of this episode that is translated by Byron. His notice of Pulci in *Don Juan* (iv, 6) shows that he accepted this 'sire of the half-serious rhyme' as his model.

## LITERATURE (1400-1500)

had developed a considerable output of *ottava rima* verse. In this the person of Charles the Great had lost its heroic proportions, and the adventures of his knights had been decorated with much burlesque detail. This kind of poem is apt to wander off into endless minor episodes—a fact that ruins that unity which even an epic requires, and makes for us not only Pulci but Boiardo and Ariosto very difficult reading. But it should be remembered that these poems were not written to be read as we read our novels and magazines, but to be recited. The *Morgante* (written between 1466 and 1480) was read aloud, it is said, at banquets given by Lucrezia Tornabuoni and Lorenzo; and Pulci probably used to read each canto as soon as it was composed.

Except by students of literature (in the barest sense of the word) this curious specimen of the romantic-comical-heroical is scarcely readable nowadays, and it would be a mere waste of time and space to attempt anything but the slightest outline. There are two parts—the first of 23 and the second of 5 cantos—with altogether about 4000 stanzas. The main story is taken from two older anonymous poems, the *Orlando* and the *Rotta di Roncisvalle*. Charles the Great, through the intrigues of the traitor Gano, is abandoned by his best paladins. The chief of these, Orlando (Roland), makes his way to the Far East, after having conquered and converted to Christianity a huge giant, Morgante, who accompanies him as his somewhat Caliban-like henchman and captures another giant, Margutte. In Persia all kinds of mad adventures take place, and Orlando becomes Sultan of Babylon; but he returns to France. Then we have the battle of Roncesvalles with its well-known episodes described at great length, and finally the death of Charlemagne.

A good idea of the nature of Pulci's work may be obtained from Byron's version of the first canto, in which is described the conversion of the conquered Morgante. From the ribald invocation to the Virgin and from many other passages will be seen the kind of thing that at the Medicean court was considered clever and amusing. The doings and sayings of the fiend Astarotte, who carries one of the heroes from Egypt to

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

Spain through the air, reminds one forcibly of Mephistopheles in the old legends.

Count Matteo Maria Boiardo was born in 1434 at Scandiano, near Reggio (Emilia), and was educated probably in Ferrara, where Guarino at that time taught. He seems then to have lived at the family castle (Scandiano), but after about 1469 to have been often employed by the Este rulers of Ferrara. Thus in 1470 he accompanied Borso d'Este to Rome, whither that prince went to be invested by Pope Paul II with the dukedom of Ferrara; and in 1473 he was one of those who escorted Eleonora of Aragon, the *fiancée* of Duke Ercole, from Naples. In 1481 Ercole made him ducal governor (*Capitano*) of Modena, and in 1487 governor of Reggio. Here he died in the 'fatal year' 1494.

His minor works, Latin and Italian, show him to have been a fine classical scholar and a skilful lyrical and dramatic verse-writer. It is, however, only his *Orlando Innamorato* that here concerns us. The poem was begun about 1472, when Pulci was about half-way through his *Morgante*. In 1482, after writing sixty cantos (say 30,000 lines), he was interrupted by the disgraceful attack on Ferrara made by Pope Sixtus IV in alliance with Venice (p. 243). This is evident from the first two stanzas of the third part, in which he proposes to renew his story 'now that the infernal tempest of pitiless war hath passed away.' The interruption seems to have been considerable, for during the ten years from the Peace of Bagnolo (that peace which is said to have so chagrined Sixtus that he died) and the death of the poet he wrote only eight and a half cantos. In the last stanza of the unfinished poem he exclaims, 'While I sing I see all Italy in flame and fire by reason of these Gauls who with great boldness come to ravage I know not what region.' This was written evidently about October or November 1494, when Charles VIII of France had descended into Italy and was devastating the Lunigiana, or perhaps when he had reached Florence, whence Piero de' Medici had fled; and it was in December, when Charles had nearly reached Rome, that the poet died.



## LITERATURE (1400-1500)

The *Orlando Innamorato* is scarcely less fantastic than the *Morgante* and is equally rich in fancy and inexhaustible in invention, and although Boiardo did not possess Pulci's gift of delineating character his poem shows real chivalry, elevation of mind, and nobility of sentiment—and so little burlesque, extravagance, and open ridicule of religion that later parodists, among whom was the famous Berni, thought it necessary, with the pretext of Boiardo's 'ugly Lombardisms,' to publish improved versions more adapted to the innate vulgarity and the exquisitely trained literary sensibility of their readers. The story of Boiardo's epic is not worth relating, but the fact is important that for the first time in Italian literature we find skilfully interwoven with Carolingian fables<sup>1</sup> the romantic chivalry and magic of the Arthurian legends. For its eager auditors the main interest of the poem doubtless consisted in the endless quarrels and thrilling adventures of the paladins caused by the appearance at Paris, and the subsequent return to the East, of the fascinating princess of far Cathay, Angelica.

The *Orlando Innamorato* is important also because it is the first great literary work—great both in bulk and in renown—which was written in the *volgare* but not by a Tuscan, and because, in spite of *brutti lombardismi*, Boiardo's language is practically the same as that of Pulci and Alberti—indeed almost the same as that of Boccaccio and Petrarca and Dante. This seems curious, but as early as the days of the Emperor Frederick II (*d.* 1250) a universal literary Italian, the *lingua cortigiana*, amazingly like that used by the early Tuscan poets, existed even in Sicily.

The demand that produced such a vast output of verse founded on the legends in which Charlemagne and Arthur were the great champions of Christendom against the infidel was doubtless greatly due to the Turkish peril, which at this time was very serious. In the 20 years succeeding the fall of Constan-

<sup>1</sup> Charlemagne is attacked in Paris by the King of 'Sericana' (China?), and is captured; but the King is conquered in a tournament and returns to the East. Then kings of Troy, Algeria, and Spain invade France, and when the poem breaks off we leave Paris besieged by seven infidel princes.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

tinople the generals of Mohammed II had wrested from Venice many of her colonies, and in the very year in which Boiardo began his poem—the year in which Pulci was half-way through his *Morgante*—Turkish hordes (as lately) were devastating the Friuli, and the smoke of the burning towns was visible from the Venetian Campanile. In 1480 Otranto was captured by the infidels, and the atrocities there perpetrated brought the peril home vividly to all Italy; nor had the dread of some terrific catastrophe disappeared in the days of Ariosto; indeed it lasted until the days of Tasso and the battle of Lepanto.

### POLIZIANO AND LORENZO

Angelo Ambrogini, called Politianus or Poliziano from Mons Politianus—Montepulciano, between Siena and Chiusi—where he was born in 1454, came as a boy to Florence to be educated at the University (*Lo Studio*). Here, at the age of 16, he astounded his teachers, Landino and the juvenile Ficino, by translating four books of Homer's *Iliad* into fine Latin hexameters—a feat that procured him the name of 'the Homeric youth.' Ere long he was engaged by Lorenzo—his senior by only five years—as court poet and house-tutor. This post he filled for many years, being entrusted with the education of Lorenzo's sons, Piero, Giovanni (later Pope Leo X), and Giuliano (later Duke of Nemours). It has been already related how he took part in the meetings of the 'Platonic Academy'; how in 1476 he commemorated the knighthood of Lorenzo's brother, Giuliano, and the beauty of Simonetta; how in 1478, being then 24 years of age, he helped to save Lorenzo from the daggers of the Pazzi conspirators by quickly closing the bronze doors of the sacristy; how he greeted Lorenzo with a Latin ode of triumph on his return from Naples; and how he alone was present at the interview between the dying Lorenzo and Savonarola. Two years later, in September of the fatal year 1494, he died at the villa near Fiesole with which he had been presented, probably in 1483, when he was made professor of eloquence at the University. He had become an admirer of Savonarola, if not an openly professed

386

## LITERATURE (1400-1500)

*Piagnone*; and it is said that he was buried in the garb of a Dominican. His tomb, as well as that of Pico della Mirandola, who died two months later at the age of 31, and also wished to be buried in the garb of a Dominican *frate*, is to be seen in the church of S. Marco.<sup>1</sup>

Poliziano's chief Italian poems are the *Orfeo*, numerous graceful *Rispetti*, and the *Stanze per la Giostra*. In all of these, even in the intensely classical *Orfeo*, the characteristically Italian eight-lined stanza prevails. There are also some *Canzoni a ballo* in which he follows the lead of Lorenzo, except in obscenity.

His life as tutor and courtier, and the adulation and imitation that he felt to be due to his poetizing patron, influenced externally the character of his poetical writings.<sup>2</sup> These influences, though they could not paralyse his genius, prevented him from choosing some 'higher mood' in which he might have produced a great original work. He was no Dante, who amidst the ribaldries of court life could create new worlds of thought and feeling. His weaker, susceptible nature, repelled by the breezy burlesque of Pulci<sup>3</sup> and the northland romance of Boiardo, was enamoured of the grace and loveliness of classic literature and art. But this passion for antiquity was not that of the mere scholar and imitator,<sup>4</sup> for at heart he was

<sup>1</sup> Savonarola doubted of Pico's salvation because of his tardy repentance and his dying before adopting the Dominican habit; but in a vision he saw him guided to Purgatory by angels, and declared the fact from the pulpit. Pico died on the day when Charles VIII entered Florence—a fact that seemed to fulfil the prophecy that he should die when the lilies bloomed (the *fleurs-de-lys*).

<sup>2</sup> And his personal character—also, perhaps, only externally; unless indeed we are to take seriously such verses as *Laurenti, vestes jam mihi mitte tuas* ('Lorenzo, do send me some of your old clothes!'). Morally he seems to have escaped contamination. This he may have owed to his ugly face and wry neck.

<sup>3</sup> Pulci, some 20 years his senior, generously recognized his genius, addressing him as *Onore e gloria di Montepulciano*.

<sup>4</sup> His Latin poems show qualities that lift them far above mere academic exercises. The longest of them is the *Silvae*, a collection of pieces (*Manto*, *Rusticus*, *Ambra*, and *Nutricia*) composed when he was professor at the *Studio*. Two of his Latin elegies are well known—one on a bunch of violets, the other on the death of a young bride, Albiera degli Albizzi, which ends with the fine lines

*Heu, rapior. Tu vive mihi. Tibi mortua vivam.  
Caligant oculi jam mihi morte graves.*

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

a true poet. Rare scholarship did indeed greatly aid his exquisite skill in the choice of words, in the music of rhythm, in the use of rich colour and sculpturesque outline ; but in his best Italian poems something beyond all this is to be found. In spite of the somewhat trivial subjects and forms of composition, even his *Rispetti* (love-dialogues, serenades, courtship verse, etc.) are full of gleams of true poetry, and the *Stanze* not only contain music and colour and purity of outline that recall the classic poets, but possess a life and individuality of their own, breathing a spirit quite different from that of antiquity : they are genuine products of the new enthusiasm for liberty and for rapturous enjoyment of all that is bright and beautiful.

A slight but interesting poem is the *Favola di Orfeo*—dramatized later and called *Tragoedia Orphei*. Poliziano wrote it in two days at the age of 17 for a festivity at the court of the Mantuan Gonzagas in honour of Galeazzo Maria Sforza. It is a dramatic lyric somewhat on the same lines as *Comus* or *Arcades*. Although as a stage-piece perhaps even less successful than these poems of Milton, it reveals an almost Greek power of intimating the sublime or the pathetic by a few exquisitely chosen words.

But Poliziano's most important work is unquestionably the *Stanze per la Giostra*, which were written, as we have seen, to commemorate the tournament held (in the Piazza of S. Croce), on Giuliano's coming of age in 1475. It was never finished ; for in 1476 Giuliano's dearly loved lady, *la bella Simonetta*, whose beauty and virtues were its main theme, suddenly died,<sup>1</sup> and ' was borne to her grave with face uncovered amidst the lamentations of all the Florentines ' ; and two years later Giuliano himself was assassinated. The 171 stanzas of which

<sup>1</sup> Simonetta Cattaneo of Genoa, wife of one of the Florentine Vespucci. She was buried in the Ognissanti church in Florence, where lie also Botticelli and that Amerigo Vespucci from whom America derives its name. Besides possible portraits of her in Botticelli's pictures, an ugly portrait, surely not of her nor by Botticelli, is to be seen in the Pitti Gallery, and a no less ugly bust. In France (Chantilly) is a striking and probably authentic likeness of her by Piero di Cosimo. See Mrs. Ady's *Painters of Florence*.





40. PRIMAVERA, BY BOTTICELLI



11. MADONNA IN ADORATION, BY FILIPPINO LIPPI

## LITERATURE (1400-1500)

the unfinished poem consists were to form an introduction to a description of the tournament. A hunting-party is pictured. Julio (Giuliano) sights and follows alone a white hind. He is led onward through the forest till he discovers in a flowery mead a lovely nymph, who reveals herself as Simonetta. Cupid, who has thus brought the lovers together, flies off to Cyprus to report his success to his mother, and we are then given pictures of the garden and palace of the Cyprian goddess. The garden reminds one of the garden of Alcinous, and as in Dido's palace, described by Virgil, there are frescos, or mosaics, in this palace of Venus. The poet is thus afforded an opportunity of presenting us with a series of exquisitely painted scenes. One of these is the Birth of Venus. New-risen from the white sea-foam she stands in a shell floating on the blue water and is being wafted by Zephyrs to the shore, where a nymph is ready to receive her and fold her in flower-starred robes. Then follow pictures, all very beautiful, of Europa, of Bacchus in his pard-drawn car, of Ariadne, of Proserpina, of Galatea.

Some well-known paintings owe their inspiration to the *Stanze*. The picture of Galatea, chariot-borne over the waves by dolphins and surrounded by sporting sea-creatures, was doubtless present to the mind of Raphael when he designed his famous fresco for the Chigi villa—now the Farnesina. Botticelli's *Venus and Mars* (in our National Gallery) was probably suggested by a passage in the poem, and his famous *Birth of Venus* is copied almost exactly from that of Poliziano. Also in his wonderful vision of Spring (*Primavera*) the painter has drawn largely from the imagination of his poet-friend. On a flowery lawn o'ershadowed by golden-fruited trees and myrtles and laurels, amidst her 'eternal garden, where joyous springtime never fails and icy winter dare not enter,' we behold the Cyprian Venus. Before her stand her three attendant Graces, and advancing we see the goddess Spring, a fair and gracious vision, like the Simonetta of the *Stanze*, 'robed in white flower-starred raiment, her white hand upholding a lap full of blossoms, and curling locks of her golden head



## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

falling over a forehead humbly proud.' At her side is Flora, behind whom 'sportive Zephyr floats and makes the green grass gay with flowers.' Aside and pointing heavenwards is Mercury, or Paris, in whom we recognize the form and features of Giuliano, and hovering aloft Cupid is aiming an arrow at his heart.<sup>1</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

In the case of **Lorenzo il Magnifico** biographical facts need not be given; nor shall I linger long over his performances as a writer, for I am obliged to limit myself to a few really important authors and artists, and although Lorenzo unquestionably did exercise an influence on the course of Italian literature, not only by his patronage but also by his writings, he was himself merely a highly cultured literary *dilettante*.

Of his zeal as a 'humanist' and a patron of art and literature many evidences have been already cited. His enthusiasm for antiquity was manifested not only in his somewhat amateur cult of Plato, but by his exceedingly valuable collections of coins and inscriptions and manuscripts and printed classics,<sup>2</sup> as well as by the favour he afforded to scholars, such as Ficino, Landino, Lascaris, Poliziano, and Pico. He moreover employed many transcribers and translators, and made gifts to the libraries of S. Marco and the Fiesolan Convent; and lastly he refounded the Pisan and fostered the young Florentine University, and instituted the famous Medicean Garden in which Leonardo, Michelangelo, and many other great artists studied ancient

<sup>1</sup> This stalwart 'Mercury' is surely rather Paris. And is he pointing to heaven, or to the golden fruit—in allusion to the apple myth? Cupid's arrow seems rather directed at one of the Graces, and not the middle one, in whom some wish us to recognize a portrait of Simonetta. Others see her likeness in the nymph who is awaiting the foam-born Venus on the shore. Botticelli's portraits of Simonetta, mentioned by Vasari, are lost. Some regard the three attendants as *Horae* (Seasons). It is true that in Greek the *Horae* are the Graces in the world of Nature, and as such are (as Hesiod makes them) *three* in number; and also Poliziano speaks of *Three Seasons*—'icy winter' not being allowed to enter the Garden. But the three *Graces* are in Greek poetry the usual attendants of Aphrodite (e.g. in Homer, *Od.* viii).

<sup>2</sup> I.e. *incunabuli*, as the earliest printed books (up to 1500) were called. In the service of Lorenzo the celebrated Lascaris brought from the East some 200 Greek manuscripts.



## LITERATURE (1400-1500)

sculpture.<sup>1</sup> But his enthusiasm for the Italian language was perhaps of still greater importance. While still a youth, doubtless inspired by Alberti, he collected early Italian lyrics, of which he sent a copy to his friend, Don Frederic, later King of Naples, together with an essay extolling (as he did later in his *Comento* on his own Sonnets, in the manner of the *Vita Nuova*) the works of Dante, Petrarca, and Boccaccio, and advocating eloquently the use of the *volgare*.<sup>2</sup>

Nor did he only advocate its use: he used it with amazing facility and volubility, pouring out in his leisure hours endless torrents of verse that excited the wonderment and applause, if not always the sincere admiration, of his courtiers.<sup>3</sup> Nor can it be denied that for us this overflow has considerable value, inasmuch as it reflects, in softened literary outlines, innumerable specimens of the Tuscan idiom of that day and not a few specimens, also in literary guise, of popular Florentine street-songs. Doubtless, too, Lorenzo's verse imparted an impulse to Italian literature; but whether it was an impulse in the right direction is questionable. Mediocre poets are, in spite of Horace, often allowed to exist, and to flourish like green bay-trees, by the favour of men and of newspaper gods and newspaper columns, but the beneficent influence of poetic mediocrity is surely not thus proved. And that mediocrity is the highest to which as a poet Lorenzo ever attained will, I think, be allowed by every one who has perused attentively the Petrarchian-Platonic sonnets and *Canzoni*, the lovelorn *Selve d'Amore* with its pasteboard *mise-en-scène* of a Virgilian Golden

<sup>1</sup> Duke Cosimo I transferred the sculptures to the Uffizi. On this Giardino Mediceo (near S. Marco) was built in 1576 the Casino Mediceo, now a court-house.

<sup>2</sup> He attempted vainly to recover from Ravenna the bones of Dante; but he succeeded, it seems, in causing the sentence of exile to be repealed and erecting a laureate bust of the poet in his *bel San Giovanni*. This was done soon after Landino had published his famous Commentary.

<sup>3</sup> Pico—in spite of his great learning a poor, or insincere, critic—declared that his patron's lyrical poetry excelled that of Dante! Poliziano, as in duty bound, lauds Lorenzo—but as regards quantity rather than quality: *Quodque tuum studiumque vocant durumque laborem, Hic tibi ludus erit. Fessus civilibus actis. . . .* etc.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

Age, the mock-Ovidian metamorphosis of the nymph Ambra into the rocky base of the new Medici villa at Poggio a Caiano, the pretty mock-bucolic *Nencia*—the prettiest touches in which are probably due to Poliziano—the *Corinto*, imitative of Virgilian Eclogues, the lively but often intensely silly *Canti a ballo* with their mock-Horatian *carpe diem* refrains, the notorious *Canti Carnascaleschi*, and, lastly, the pious *Laude spirituali*.

In connexion with some, and not a few, of the *Canti*, especially the *Canti Carnascaleschi*, a question arises—that of indecency—which perhaps would be waived aside as of no importance by those who, like old Guarino, regard the scope of life as one and the scope of art as another. But even to such persons it may seem of some interest to consider whether it was really the consciousness that art is never immoral that allowed Lorenzo to write, and to sing amidst the laughter of Carnival crowds, what surely would seem to be from every point of view a most objectless obscenity—utterly deficient in that humour which, as Horace tells us, oft excels solemnity, utterly and essentially different from the coarsest Shakespearian realism—or whether the motive was just a love of nastiness, explainable, perhaps, in contrast to the pious fervour of his hymns (*Laude*), by that double nature of his which Machiavelli notes.<sup>1</sup>

But there is still another possibility; and on this point we may not only cite numerous historians who speak of Lorenzo suffocating with the splendour of art all aspirations towards liberty,<sup>2</sup> but also give ear to the greatest poet of United Italy. In his edition of Lorenzo's poems Carducci says that 'Lorenzo invented the *Canti Carnascaleschi* in order to intoxicate the people with careless gaiety, and perhaps he misused the *lauda spirituale* for the object of depressing their spirits—fostering ascetic piety and turning their thoughts heavenward in order that he himself might reign more absolutely and securely.'

<sup>1</sup> *Ist. Fior.* viii, 36. In Lorenzo the *due persone diverse quasi con impossibile congiunzione congiunte* seem to have been sometimes wholly distinct. A Lorenzo-admirer, Mr. Horsburgh, admits that 'when under the sway of the carnal he felt no shame.'

<sup>2</sup> See the *Storia d'Arte* of Natali and Vitelli (1915), vol. ii, p. 9.

## LITERATURE (1400-1500)

Professor Villari too, who was probably the foremost modern authority on this period of Italian history, though he admits the vigour (*brio*) of some of the Carnival songs, adds that others 'contain obscenities which nowadays could not even be hinted at,' and that 'Lorenzo himself used to arrange the Carnival masquerades and to requisition for the purpose the best sculptors and painters so that art and elegance might aid moral corruption to penetrate deeper.' Another trustworthy authority, Mr. Gardner, in his *Story of Florence* affirms that Lorenzo 'revelled in pruriency, less for its own sake than for the deliberate corruption of the Florentines.' But there are things to be found in Lorenzo's so-called poems that are more revolting than obscenity itself. In an unfinished piece composed in *terza rima* and entitled *Il Simposio* or *I Beoni* ('The Sots') he has given us a most repulsive and contemptible caricature of Dante's majestic style, and to some extent of his great Vision. Even if we regard this picture of bestiality—worse even than that of Auerbach's wine-cellar—as a satire on drunkenness such as Hogarth might have perhaps demeaned himself to paint, it is impossible not to feel the most intense disgust and indignation at the thought of a writer who could put into the mouth of a drunken sot words that allude with ribaldry to the pathetic cry of Christ on the cross.

## CHAPTER VII

### ART (1400-1500)

*(See List of Artists and Index for further details)*

WE accepted 1425—the year in which Ghiberti began his second bronze door—as a convenient point from which to date the Renaissance of art. But though various periods in the evolution of the new Italian art are easily discerned, they are not easily defined, for they fade away into each other like the various parts of the day or the colours of the rainbow. It may therefore be better to relegate chronological divisions, main and transitional, to the List of Artists, and in this chapter to speak of the Quattrocento as the period of Early and the Cinquecento as that of Late Renaissance art. As in the case of literature, so also in the case of art, it is an error to regard the Renaissance as merely a revival. It was a new birth, a new and original manifestation of the Italian spirit, externally modified, it is true, both for good and for evil by the classical revival, but essentially independent in its origin and during the first stages of its development. As in that earlier, brilliant but short-lived, manifestation which we connect with the names of Niccolò Pisano, Giotto, Arnolfo Cambio, and Dante, so also in the so-called Renaissance architecture of Brunelleschi and Michelozzo, in the sculpture of Della Quercia and Donatello and Della Robbia, the painting of Masaccio and Botticelli and Bellini, and the poetry of Boiardo and Poliziano, the formative spirit was purely Italian. In none of the works of the greater Quattrocento painters, sculptors, or architects is to be found that absurd affectation of ‘classicism’ which in the next century gradually enveloped and finally smothered in grandiosity and decorative magnificence all that was genuine and vital in earlier Renaissance art.



# A R T (1400-1500)

## PAINTING

My first subject is Quattrocento painting. For the sake of distinctness I shall treat it under two heads: (a) Its general nature; (b) The various schools, with remarks on some great artists.

(a) It has often been remarked that painting is a far better medium than sculpture for expressing such of the multitudinous imaginings and emotions of the modern spirit as can find expression in art. It is as if, in passing through the intervening ages, and impinging on the countless variety of modern life and modern thought, the white radiance had broken into infinitely various lights and shadows and colours. This adaptability of painting to the ever more various needs of the age, and the possibility of producing something tolerable with far less labour and expense than was necessary for sculpture, account partly for the immense number of Renaissance painters; and it is easy to understand the tendency, that began now to be so perceptible, to abandon 'pure outline,' which had often made earlier pictorial art compete with the delicate contours of marble reliefs,<sup>1</sup> and to adopt the artifices of modelling, misty outline, aerial perspective, effects of light and shade and so forth, in order better to indicate the true relations of natural objects as regards site and light and colour, to intimate distances and vast spaces and vistas into the infinite, and to suggest motion in a manner entirely alien to sculpture.

The Renaissance originated in that longing for emancipation from the shackles of the past which is probably felt by every new generation, and which now and then, favoured by special conditions, succeeds in realizing its ideals—not always to the world's advantage. The ideals in this case were joy and liberty and personality, liberation from medieval asceticism, medieval priestcraft, medieval dogma; liberation from the anathema that had rested on the natural rights of man—on freedom of thought and of moral judgment; liberation from traditional

<sup>1</sup> See p. 180 *n.* for what Mr. Berenson says about the Siena school.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

law and self-constituted authority, and the restoration to the individual of intellectual and moral self-rule.

The result in the case of Quattrocento painting is very marked. The new ideals are visible everywhere. Ever since the extinction of pagan art, painting and mosaics had been almost entirely subservient to ecclesiasticism. The new enthusiasm, although by no means anti-Christian in its higher moods, asserted in rivalry with the Church its rightful claims; and art, as Morelli says, to no small extent abandoned the houses of God for the houses of men. Frescos of Paradise and Hell, and of religious subjects such as Giotto and his followers were engaged by the clergy to paint on walls of churches and cloisters, now become rare,<sup>1</sup> while in altar-pieces and other 'religious' pictures are found numerous signs of the new era. Firstly, personality and 'naturalism' assert themselves by the introduction of many actual portraits, not only among spectators, but also in guise of Madonnas, angels, apostles, saints, Magi, and so forth.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, joy in nature itself is evidenced by exquisite surroundings and backgrounds unknown, or only slightly suggested, in earlier paintings. Thirdly, delight in colour and form, and also in sound, is manifested by beautiful, varied, rich and sometimes magnificent dresses—offering very striking contrasts to the sombre, ungainly, uniform garb to be seen in Trecento paintings<sup>3</sup>—and

<sup>1</sup> The diffusion of books and prints doubtless contributed to this.

<sup>2</sup> See Index for Botticelli's sacred pictures and Benozzo Gozzoli's 'Magi' fresco.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. Giotto's frescos at Assisi and in S. Croce. That fine dresses and music were in vogue among gay young Florentines about 1350 is shown by the famous Campo Santo fresco at Pisa. Fil. Villani attributes the new and luxurious fashions to the reaction after the plague of 1348—which is symbolized by Death in this fresco. But in the picture of old Giovanni di Bicci (c. 1420) we still find the cowl-like, or cassock-like, garb common in Dante's age. About 1390, it is said, the general fashion of gay apparel began, and during the Quattrocento developed great richness and variety, such as we see in pictures of Botticelli, the Lippi, Benozzo Gozzoli, the Bellini, Mantegna, Ghirlandaio, Pinturicchio, and others. Even in his scenes of Heaven, Fra Angelico depicts dresses more varied and beautiful than those of any ball-room. The letters of Beatrice and Isabella d'Este are often as full of dress and jewels and all sorts of finery as a ladies' newspaper's description of a royal reception. In the *Cortegiano* (ii) there is an interesting passage on the rage for individualism in dress (c. 1506).

## ART (1400-1500)

by frequent appearance of such symbols of enjoyment as musical instruments.<sup>1</sup> Lastly, we have far greater beauty of figure and features and far greater happiness in expression.

But besides 'religious' pictures we find now works of a very different nature, not produced for pious objects or to impose the doctrines and legends of the Church on superstitious ignorance, but to adorn the palaces of the rich or, more rarely the council-halls of the people—portraits, *genre* paintings, scenes of battle, of historical events, and of grand ceremonies, allegorical and mythological pictures (such as the *Primavera* and the *Birth of Venus*)—and in all these we have the same personal and naturalistic qualities and the same delight in liberty, in beauty, and in magnificence that we have already noted as so characteristic of all Renaissance painting. But in passing we should perhaps remark that, although this enthusiasm for liberty and joy released the Renaissance artist from dreary vassalage to the Church, it too often gave him over to another, and perhaps drearier, bondage—the service of the rich patron or the despot, political or pontifical; for it was but comparatively rarely, and more rarely in Florence than in some other Italian cities (notably Venice), that art rose to real freedom and exercised its highest function, namely that of serving the State and educating the people. It remained, as has been well said, essentially *un' arte signorile e cortigiana*.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In medieval art there are very few evidences of music, though one hears of Church music (Gregorian, Ambrosian, etc.) and of the famous Guido of Arezzo (c. 1000-1050), who invented modern notation; but from the Trecento onwards we have musical instruments often represented. All will remember Giotto's (or Andrea Pisano's) Campanile relief of Jubal; the Pisan fresco of the young Florentines making merry; Fra Angelico's angel choirs; Melozzo's, Rosselli's, Giambellini's, and Carpaccio's music-making cherubs or *putti*; Raphael's 'Violinist' and his S. Caecilia. In his 'Parnassus' (*Stanze*) Raphael has depicted in the guise of Apollo a contemporary musician, San-secondo, who was the Moro's favourite court violinist at Milan. Both the Moro (Lodovico) and his wife, Beatrice d'Este, were devoted to music and took about with them on their travels singers and other musicians. Beatrice and Isabella were very proud of possessing exquisitely made instruments, especially those made for them by the famous Gusnasco, 'master of organs.' As we shall see, Leonardo da Vinci first came to the Moro's court as musician and as maker of a certain lute of remarkable qualities.

<sup>2</sup> Natali and Vitelli (*Storia d'Arte*). The celebrated designs of Leonardo

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

As regards technique, although Quattrocento painting did not arrive at the exquisite modelling and chiaroscuro that we find in the next century, remaining still somewhat flat, hard-outlined, and wanting in contrasts, it enjoyed three great advantages—first, a much more thorough knowledge of anatomy than that possessed by such artists as Niccolò Pisano and Giotto; second, the knowledge of linear perspective, the laws of which were discovered, or anyhow first taught and applied scientifically, by Paolo Uccello (c. 1430); third, the use of oil. This was known as a medium in Florence as early as the days of Andrea del Castagno, or even those (c. 1400) in which Cennini wrote his tractate on painting; but genuine oil-painting, discovered perhaps by Van Eyck of Bruges, was used, say Crowe and Cavalcaselle, only tentatively and unsuccessfully during the Quattrocento by Florentine artists, many of whose works are executed partly in *tempera* and partly in oil, and was not adopted by the Bellini and other Venetians until about 1473, when, according to the not very trustworthy statement of Vasari, it was introduced direct from the Netherlands by Antonello da Messina, and at once attained brilliant results.

(b) We have seen that after the death of Orcagna (1368) both sculpture and painting, during the last third of the Trecento, passed through a barren period which I likened to that which occurs between the first spring flowers and the great outburst of early summer. With the Quattrocento begins early Renaissance art.

An Italian painting of the Quattrocento, says Morelli, speaks its native dialect. In order to be sure that we understand such a picture we should, as far as possible, learn its dialect—become to some extent acquainted with the history and natural surroundings of the artist's native or adopted home, and with his artistic, social, political, religious, and perhaps his climatic environment: for without accepting the conclusions

and Michelangelo (not to mention Vasari!) for the decoration of the great Council-hall in the Palazzo Vecchio were about the only employment of art by the Florentine State—except horrible effigies of traitors!



## ART (1400-1500)

of a Buckle and a Taine in regard to the serious moral and artistic responsibilities of climate, we may allow that it does affect a painter's methods. We see this indeed plainly when comparing Flemish with Italian, or Venetian with Florentine, or Florentine with Neapolitan pictures, and still more clearly when comparing the vapoury Italian scenery of a Turner with the background of a Perugino, a Leonardo, or a Tiziano, and most clearly of all perhaps when we look at some modern befogged British water-colour of, say, Rome from the Gianicolo or Naples from Posilipo.

But, perhaps fortunately, brevity forbids me to follow up such questions. I shall therefore briefly indicate a few characteristics of six important schools of Quattrocento painting, and add a few remarks on some of the chief artists.

(1) **Florence and Tuscany.** The art of Fra Angelico (1387-1455), says Mr. Symonds, may be likened to a lakelet lying aside the main stream of the Renaissance—a lakelet, we might add, whose waters, golden with heaven's light and overarched by its cloudless blue, are embosomed amidst countless flowers. Although he was a pupil of Starnina (the master also of Masolino) and adopted to some extent Lorenzo Monaco's methods of colouring, what was essential in his style owed nothing until his later days to other painters, nor did any other succeed in learning it. In his earlier, characteristic style we may note two phases. In one we have a kind of enlarged *miniatura* with exquisitely painted scenes,<sup>1</sup> often of a visionary, dazzling, shadowless world where the splendours of light and colour and sound—of gold and jewels and gleaming apparel and triumphal music—symbolize the glories of a Heaven beyond human imagination. The other phase is different, not in conception so much as in

<sup>1</sup> His brother, Fra Benedetto, was a famous *miniature*. Many of such beautifully illuminated ritual-books are to be seen in the otherwise empty library of S. Marco. The finest of Angelico's earlier altar-pieces (c. 1430) are the two *Coronations of the Virgin*—one in the Louvre (stolen by Napoleon from S. Domenico di Fiesole), and the other in the Uffizi Gallery). The great Triptych (*Tabernacolo*) in the Uffizi shows Angelico's inability to attain grandeur, but the small music-making angels at the sides of the central figures are justly popular, being of exquisite grace and beauty.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

presentation, and the difference is mainly due to the medium—that of fresco. Here, pure, serene, transparent colours and soft, ethereal outlines almost attain effects that Dante attains in his *Paradiso*. Of such pictures the cloister and the cells of S. Marco's monastery contain the finest examples.<sup>1</sup> The later, Roman, style of Angelico, inspired probably by Masaccio's work, has been described elsewhere. Moreover his visits to Rome and his death there have been related, and the other few details already given of his long life—with the Dominicans of Fiesole, then with them as exile at Cortona, then at S. Marco as painter and Prior, and finally at Rome—must suffice.

Masaccio in his short life (1400–28) produced works that proved the beginning of a new era for Italian painting—the era of imaginative grandeur and beauty combined with realistic truth—of art wedded to science. Masolino is called his master and is highly praised by Vasari for his modelling and his *dolcezza* in female portraiture; but Vasari did not know the genuine work of Masolino at Castiglione Olona, which proves him to have been immeasurably inferior to Masaccio. However, experts still differ as to what parts, if any, of the famous frescos in the Carmine church (Florence) and in S. Clemente (Rome) should be attributed to the elder painter. These Carmine frescos of Masaccio were most zealously studied by many artists, among whom were Michelangelo Buonarroti and Raphael. It is asserted that Raphael copied them seven times; and while copying them, it is said, Michelangelo received from his fellow-pupil, Torreggiani, the hammer-blow that broke his nose. Most of us know the *Adam and Eve* under the Tree of Knowledge (by some attributed to Masolino) and the more dramatic *Expulsion from Eden*, the Eve of which was used by Raphael for a similar picture in the *Loggie* at Rome. Especially wonderful—immeasurably removed by its intimation of the dignity of the human face and body, and by its powerful composition, from any Giottesque art—is the

<sup>1</sup> At S. Domenico di Fiesole is a ruined *Crucifixion* (with, as usual, a fair-haired Christ) which is evidently the original of the most beautiful one in S. Marco.

## ART (1400-1500)

*Tribute Money*; nor less wonderful are *The Healing of the Sick*, and *The Raising of Tabitha*. Masaccio was probably still (1426-7) occupied with his Carmine frescos (finished later by Filippino Lippi) when, perhaps moved by the Roman experiences of his great friend Brunelleschi, now building S. Lorenzo and the dome of the Florentine Cathedral, he suddenly went off to the Eternal City; and there he is said to have died. Perhaps Vasari has best summed up what can be said of Masaccio's art, namely that all human figures painted by earlier artists were merely pictures, but his were living people. Vasari, however, probably thought his own performances even better than Masaccio's, for he seems to have covered over that painter's fine fresco of the *Trinity* (in S. M. Novella) with a poor daub of his own. The fresco has been removed to the south wall, and is much damaged.

Paolo di Dono, called 'Uccello,' and Andrea del Castagno belonged to the new Naturalist school,<sup>1</sup> of which the short-lived Masaccio was the first great luminary. Paolo we have met before as the painter of the *terra verde* fresco (now on canvas) in the Florentine Duomo representing Sir John Hawkwood on his charger—one of the first really correct representations of a horse in modern art (see Fig. 5 and Index). He has also been mentioned as the first great authority on perspective. He delighted in studying and depicting animals, especially birds—whence his nickname. One of his most famous works was a battle between lions and serpents painted for Lorenzo il Magnifico. Battle scenes in which horses were conspicuous were a speciality of his. One such picture is in our National Gallery. His masterpiece was the now much ruined *terra verde* fresco of the Deluge in the Green Cloister of S. Maria Novella. In this is vigorously indicated the tragic helplessness of human beings against the powers of

<sup>1</sup> Brunelleschi, Donatello, and Ghiberti warmly supported the young Naturalist painters, whose aims are exceedingly well expressed by Ghiberti when he says that he himself made it his one object 'to discover how nature is revealed in art and how natural forms really present themselves to the eye.' Note that all these fellow-artists of Masaccio lived to enjoy long the patronage of Cosimo, but that he died before Cosimo came to the front.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

nature; but even in this, his greatest, work he does not rise above accuracy and strenuousness. Andrea del Castagno (whose connexion with oil-painting has been already noted) was, perhaps, the greater artist of the two, for nothing of Paolo's rivals Andrea's *Last Supper* (one of his later works) in conception and composition. This, as well as most of his other extant works, is now to be seen in the Museum, once the Refectory, of S. Apollonia, in Florence (see Fig. 11). We possess in our National Gallery a *Crucifixion* by him. Vigorous design, striking chiaroscuro, and a tendency to coarseness, or even brutality, are his chief characteristics. Two later works of his are a rather dramatic *St. George* in a little church above the seaside townlet of Lévanto, and the rather unattractive *terra verde* equestrian portrait of Niccolò da Tolentino which in the Florentine Duomo fails to hold its own in rivalry with the *John Hawkwood* of Paolo Uccello.

Filippo Lippi (1406-69) being an orphan was brought up at the Carmine convent. He took vows as Carmelite friar, but having developed gifts as a painter (under Lorenzo Monaco and Masaccio, who about 1424 began his frescos in the Carmelite church) he found monasticism unpalatable. So he betook himself to a wandering life, and, if we can believe Vasari and others, he was captured by Moorish corsairs near Ancona and spent some years (c. 1431-34) as a captive in North Africa. We find him then at Florence, patronized by Cosimo (himself just returned from exile) and producing a great number of religious pictures, although living in anything but a religious fashion. From about 1456 to 1464 he resided at Prato, occupied mainly with his famous frescos—the Stories of the Baptist and St. Stephen. Here he incited the nun Lucrezia Buti to live with him as his mistress, until finally Pope Pius II made the offer (perhaps rejected by the painter) to absolve them both from their vows and recognize their marriage. His last great work was the frescos at Spoleto, where he died and is buried. He differed very much from his unimaginative, scientific-naturalistic contemporaries, such as Paolo Uccello, and also from Masaccio, whose powerful



## ART (1400-1500)

and vivid realism seems not to have appealed to his more delicately aesthetic nature; for, in spite of the dramatic element in some of his works (as the celebrated *Herod's Feast* and *Dance of Salome* at Prato, so much admired by Michelangelo), his tendency was towards what is bright and beautiful in nature and gentle and lovely in humanity—as one sees especially in the very gracious type of his Madonnas—a type that he seems to have found so attractive in the person of Lucrezia, whose portrait occurs in his later paintings.

Benozzo Gozzoli was a clever pupil of Fra Angelico and acquired very extraordinary skill in design, vivid colour, elaborate scenery, and realistic portraiture, as displayed in his famous *Procession of the Magi* in the Medici Palace (Fig. 28 and p. 313). In the Pisan Campo Santo<sup>1</sup> and at S. Gimignano there are large and interesting frescos by him (Old Testament subjects and the life of St. Augustine) which reveal very considerable ability as story-teller. He seems to have adopted the later style of his master, such as we see in Angelico's Roman frescos. As a student (not very successful) of the new scientific methods he is, of course, somewhat the superior of Angelico, whose attempts to depict the human body, whether at rest or in motion, were elementary; but he is totally lacking in all that gives value to the art of Angelico.

Verocchio (1435-88) will occupy our attention later as a sculptor. As painter he is notable chiefly because he was a teacher of Perugino and the sole teacher of Leonardo da Vinci. His mastery in anatomical knowledge drew him towards sculpture rather than painting, which by him was evidently used for experiment rather than for accomplishment. 'He designed and began to paint many cartoons,' says Vasari, 'but always left them unfinished.' Various female portraits, an *Annunciation* in the Uffizi (perhaps by his pupil Leonardo), a *Madonna and Child* in our National Gallery, and another at Berlin, have been attributed to him, but the only picture known certainly to be his is the *Baptism* (lately removed from

<sup>1</sup> His 23 big frescos fill a great part of the north wall. He lies buried close to the Joseph fresco.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

the Accademia to the Uffizi), in which, tradition asserts, a beautiful kneeling angel was painted by Leonardo. The spare, almost ascetically meagre, figure and the intense expression that we see in this picture are used by Verrocchio also in his sculpture (e.g. his *David*), and are traceable also in Leonardo.

Of Botticelli (1446-1510) much has already been said in connexion with Lorenzo de' Medici and Poliziano. As a youth he worked under Filippo Lippi at Prato and Florence. He soon attracted the notice of Lorenzo. It was probably at this period that he painted some of his religious pictures, such as the *Virgin of the Magnificat*. In 1474 we find him with Benozzo Gozzoli at Pisa. On his return he evidently became strongly influenced by the classical enthusiasm prevalent at the Medicean court, and it was then, shortly after the *Giostra* of 1475, that he produced the *Primavera* and the *Birth of Venus*, drawing his inspiration from Poliziano's *Stanze*. Nor can we, unfortunately, omit here another of his works--the disgusting effigies of the hanged conspirators painted (one hopes, by compulsion) on the walls of the Palazzo Vecchio (pp. 326-7). Then, about 1480, we have the return of Lorenzo from Naples and Botticelli's *Pallas and the Centaur*; then, probably, the *Magi* (Fig. 31) and the fine portrait of Giovanni di Cosimo (Fig. 29) and the St. Augustine in the Ognissanti church which the St. Jerome of Ghirlandaio on the opposite wall vainly attempts to rival. From 1481 to 1483 he was at Rome with Perugino, Rosselli, and Ghirlandaio, occupied in painting the well-known frescos (the *Story of Moses*) in the Sistine Chapel. After return he produced some beautiful altar-pieces, of which perhaps the finest is the *Madonna with the two Saint Johns*, painted for Brunelleschi's newly completed church of S. Spirito, but now, alas! in Berlin. In 1489 Savonarola began to exercise his wondrous influence in Florence, and, as we have seen elsewhere, Botticelli was one of those artists and scholars attached to the Medicean court who were deeply impressed by the denunciations of the courageous Frate. He may not have actually burnt any of his works--for none were tainted with licentiousness--but his paintings henceforth were of a more

## A R T (1400-1500)

grave and earnest character. Amongst these we have the *Adoration of the Child Jesus*<sup>1</sup> and, painted after the reformer's martyrdom in 1498, the strange allegorical picture of *Calumny* (founded on Lucian's account of a picture by the Greek painter Apelles, and evidently directed against the calumniators of Savonarola), and the *Nativity*, a most interesting picture in our National Gallery, in which angels are welcoming to Heaven Savonarola and his fellow-martyrs.<sup>2</sup> During his last ten years Botticelli, living in great seclusion, usually perhaps on his little *podere* outside the Porta S. Frediano, devoted much of his time to Dante, to illustrate whose great poem he made 84 drawings—most of them (once more alas!) now in Berlin. One of the few facts that we know connected with the last stage of his life is that in 1504 he, together with Leonardo da Vinci and other artists, chose the site where Michelangelo's *David* stood for nigh 370 years—until, in 1873, it was removed to the Accademia.

Filippino Lippi (1457-1504), the son of Fra Filippo and Lucrezia Buti, and the pupil of Botticelli, made his reputation by the very successful way in which, at the age of 27, he finished and added to the frescos of Masaccio in the Carmine church. But his greatness lay in another direction. It is his undramatic, contemplative, religious pictures—his Madonnas especially, and his angels—that bring us, from the ideal world, a message of great value rather than these dramatic and realistic frescos, or those in S. Maria sopra Minerva at Rome, or those in the Strozzi Chapel at Florence. There is in the Uffizi a large and ambitious painting of his—an *Adoration of the Magi* with about 30 figures—that is historically very interesting, for it contains portraits of some of the younger branch of the Medicean family; but many of us would probably select a

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 335 n., 486 n. The Florentines chose Jesus Christ as their King probably twice—once after Piero's expulsion (1495), and a second time in 1528, just before the siege and the overthrow of the Republic, when over the entrance of the Palazzo Vecchio was placed an inscription, *Jesus Christus rex Florentini populi*. This was altered by Duke Cosimo I into *rex regum*.

<sup>2</sup> The long Greek inscription on the picture gives 1500 as the date and refers us to St. John's *Revelation* vii-viii.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

very different picture as his master-work—that fast-fading vision of the Virgin amidst child-angels which may yet be seen in a street-tabernacle near the convent of Sta Margherita at Prato. It is one of his later works (1498), but—influenced perhaps by scenes of his childhood—he seems to have reverted to a type which attracts us by its gentle beauty in some of his earlier fair-haired Madonnas,<sup>1</sup> and which possibly may have been derived from memories of his mother—once a nun in this Prato convent.

Ghirlandaio (1449–94) produced a multitude of works—all but one of a more or less ‘religious’ nature.<sup>2</sup> Many are interesting on account of realistic portraits of contemporaries whom he introduced in the guise of Biblical and ecclesiastical personages. He was evidently influenced strongly by Flemish art. His skill in the imitation of externalities—clothes, upholstery, finery of all sorts, pots and pans and all kinds of utensils, etc. etc.—is astounding. He would probably have beaten Parrhasius himself at painting deceptive curtains. This imitative skill is at times subordinated to a noble dignity in conception and composition, whereby real artistic value is lent to some of his pictures—such as the fine *Adoration of the Shepherds* (Accademia) and the *Calling of SS. Peter and Andrew* (Sistine Chapel). But this is rare, and the best that can be said of such productions as the Santa Fina frescos at S. Gimignano, the St. Jerome of the Ognissanti frescos in Florence, and the big and much-belauded frescos, painted over works of Orcagna, in the choir of S. Maria Novella, or those in Santa Trinità, is that they sometimes almost rival the best realistic imitation that one sees in modern Academies and Salons, and that it is often really interesting to know what Landino, Poliziano, Ficino, Giovanna Tornabuoni, and other celebrated people of the day looked like—including the artist himself and possibly also the great navigator Amerigo Vespucci.

<sup>1</sup> E.g. in the well-known *Vision of St. Bernard* (Badia), and the beautiful *Adoration of the Child* (Uffizi) with its landscape veiled in blue mist (Fig. 41).

<sup>2</sup> His delight in mere production was such that he longed to be able to cover all the city walls of Florence with his frescos.



## ART (1400-1500)

Ghirlandaio died of the plague at the early age of 44. Among his pupils were Granacci (see Fig. 34) and Michelangelo.

(2) **Umbria and the Marche.** At the beginning of the Quattrocento we find in Umbria, and in the beautiful and mountainous country to the north-east of Perugia and Assisi, a school of painting distinguished by a tranquil and somewhat serious beauty which—although it may have been suggested by Sienese art and influenced by Fra Angelico—has a character of its own. The chief early Umbrian artist was Gentile of Fabriano, one of whose master-works, the *Adoration of the Magi* (Fig. 42), is in the Florentine Accademia, where it offers a pleasing contrast to Ghirlandaio's *Adoration of the Shepherds*. While still a young man he was several years at Venice, where he decorated the Doges' Palace. From him Jacopo Bellini learnt the new and beautiful Umbrian method, which having developed a specially Venetian type (as was ever the case in Venice) became the characteristic style of the Bellini school.

The second great Umbrian-Marchian painter was Piero della Francesca (c. 1423-92), born near the Tuscan frontier, amid the Apennines east of Arezzo. He studied first, perhaps, under Gentile, and then under Domenico Veneziano at Perugia and at Florence, where he became a friend of Andrea del Castagno.<sup>1</sup> His easel paintings, especially his portraits, as may be seen from Fig. 39, are sometimes of pure Umbrian workmanship, as exquisitely elaborated as those by Perugino himself, and his landscape backgrounds are of Peruginesque beauty. But at Florence he adopted the bolder 'naturalism' of Domenico and Andrea and Paolo Uccello, and studied zealously (as did later Raphael and Michelangelo) the frescos of Masaccio. He thus acquired skill in two styles; and these two exceedingly diverse styles—one intensely vigorous, plastic, and dramatic, and the other tranquil and attitudinizing—were manifested vividly in two famous Umbrians who were both, probably, his pupils,

<sup>1</sup> At Florence oil-painting was now being adopted by Domenico and Andrea. Piero's fresco of Sigismondo in the Tempio Malatestiano (built by Alberti) at Rimini is famous.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

Signorelli of Cortona—the ‘forerunner of Michelangelo’—and Perugino, who, as all know, was the master of Raphael.<sup>1</sup>

The paintings of Signorelli (*e.g.* his scenes from the life of Moses in the Sistine Chapel and the very grand frescos at Orvieto—called by Morelli the grandest of all Quattrocento paintings) display sometimes an almost Michelangelesque power, and though they show no trace of Michelangelo’s imaginative sublimity they are intensely interesting as the works of a fellow-pupil of Perugino (who, however, himself became un-Peruginesque in his later days) and as the Umbrian development of the grand Florentine style founded by Masaccio—the style which by its sublimity as well as by its mere *terribilità* was destined to dominate Italian pictorial art and cause even Raphael himself to succumb to the influence of the great Italian sculptor who painted the Sibyls and Prophets and the Creation of Man.

Perugino, at first probably a pupil of Piero, when 20 years of age left Umbria for Florence, where he was a fellow-pupil with Leonardo da Vinci in the studio of Verrocchio. About 1482, at the age of 36 or so, he painted his exquisitely designed fresco in the Sistine Chapel at Rome (*St. Peter receiving the Keys*), the motive and background of which are used by Raphael in his *Sposalizio*. In 1493 he settled in Florence. With some of his many and beautiful easel pictures most of my readers are doubtless familiar, and those who know Florence will remember the *Deposition* in the Pitti and the *Assumption* in the Accademia as well as the fine frescos in S. M. Maddalena di Pazzi and the convent of S. Onofrio. Also at Perugia there are noteworthy frescos. It is sometimes urged to his discredit that in later life he, with his pupils, turned out a great deal for mere profit. He seems to have had regular picture-shops in Florence and Perugia.

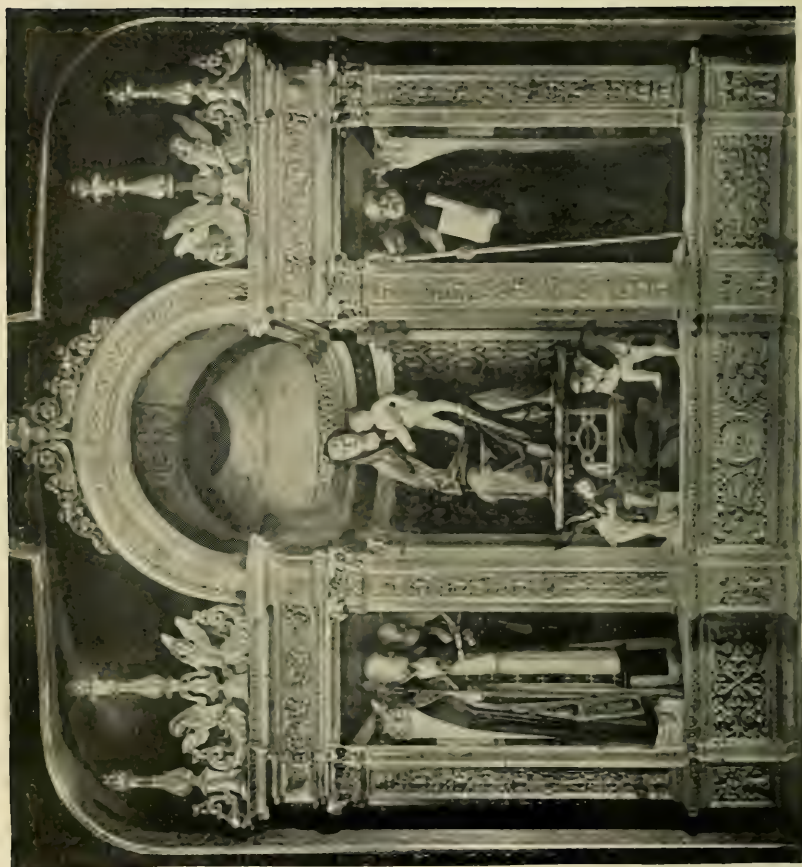
Pinturicchio, whose extensive works at Rome, in the

<sup>1</sup> Raphael’s first master was his own father, Giovanni Santi of Urbino (Marche), who was probably a follower of Piero, if not a fellow-pupil of Signorelli and Perugino in Piero’s studio. Another fine painter, Melozzo of Forlì (not far south of Ravenna), was an intimate friend of Piero’s, or possibly for a time his pupil. We shall meet him in the Lombard-Emilian school.



42. THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI, BY GENTILE DA FABRIANO





43. MADONNA AND SAINTS, BY GIOVANNI BELLINI



## A R T (1400-1500)

Sistine Chapel and the Sale Borgia, and at Siena (Biblioteca Piccolomini) have been described in connexion with Popes Alexander VI and Pius II, may have studied in his younger days under Perugino (who was only eight years his senior), but more probably derived his style from purely Umbrian sources. He was a skilful decorator and portrait-painter rather than a great artist. His Vatican frescos, though sadly spoilt by Germanic repainting, are historically interesting. The Siena paintings are on a higher level (Fig. 19).

(3) **Venice and Padua.**<sup>1</sup> Venetian painting has been dubbed by Sir Joshua Reynolds and others with the epithet 'ornamental.' This is surely very superficial criticism. Much nearer the mark, I think, is the affirmation of Pater that no artists have apprehended more unerringly than the Venetian the real nature and possibilities of pictorial art—a statement which seems confirmed by the glow of satisfaction, aesthetic if not intellectual, that one feels when one enters the Venetian Room in a picture gallery. It is true that the object of much Venetian painting was decorative. To realize this we have only to think of the Doges' Palace—not only as it is now, adorned with the magnificent works of Tiziano, Tintoretto, Paolo Veronese, Palma Giovane, and other late masters, but as it was before the great fire of 1577, enriched by the paintings of many famous Quattrocento artists, such as the Bellini, whom the State engaged to perpetuate the glories of the Venetian Republic. It is also true that native Venetian painting was from the first sensuous rather than intellectual, and became more and more so. The Venetian loved that splendour in art which he saw in Venetian sunset and sunrise. Even Gentile Bellini—in his vanished historical paintings in the Doges' Palace as well as in the extant, magnificent *Procession* and *Preaching of St. Mark*—displayed a love for pageantry and pomp, and in spite of their wondrous tranquillity Giovanni Bellini's religious pictures reveal a delight in colour and sunshine, and in the beauty of the natural world and of gracious form and feature and drapery, which is quite as perceptible as

<sup>1</sup> See also end of Chapter V for Mantegna and the Bellini.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

in Tiziano himself, though expressed on a smaller scale. But although sensuous, Venetian art is most certainly not merely 'ornamental.' Quite as much as any other artists, the great Venetian painters fulfil the highest function of art—that of revelation.

As ever, the new influence arrived late at Venice. In the first half of the Quattrocento native Venetian art could produce little else but triptychs and suchlike pieces. To decorate their great Council-hall the Republic had to seek artists from elsewhere—such as Gentile da Fabriano from Umbria. It was not till about 1440 that Antonio Vivarini founded on the island of Murano the *bottega* (workshop) which proved the original source of genuine Venetian painting. This source was at first tainted by foreign influence, for a certain Johann of Germany, with Teutonic genius for peaceful penetration, joined the Vivarini studio, and the early efforts of the Murano school remind one strongly of the unlovely products of early (pre-Dürer) German art. But fortunately Antonio's brother, Bartolomeo (c. 1430–1500), and other Muranesi passed under the influence of the new Paduan school and its great master, Mantegna, and even developed (what Mantegna himself failed to do) some skill in the newly introduced method of oil-painting.

But there was already making itself felt in Venice an influence that was destined most effectually to extinguish all relics of Teutonic unloveliness and to take the place (gently but firmly) of the noble but austere influence of Mantegna. This was that *dolce stil nuovo* which, as we have seen, had originated in Umbria with Gentile da Fabriano. By him the first of the Bellini, Jacopo, was taught this sweet new Umbrian style, and from Jacopo it was learnt by his two famous sons, Gentile and Giovanni, who combined it with a few of the best elements in the traditions and practice of the Paduans and the Muranesi, and, having brought oil-painting to great perfection, formed the first great school of Venetian painting—of all the schools of the Italian Renaissance perhaps the greatest in the attainment of spiritualized human beauty.

To this *Scuola bellinesca* belonged Cima da Conegliano, and

## ART (1400-1500)

contemporary with him was Carpaccio. Cima is sometimes treated condescendingly—even contemptuously—by experts. His paintings are excellent, we are told; they have a ‘mild and agreeable air,’ but show no real grandeur, nor even originality, and but little technical skill.<sup>1</sup> It is true that they can bear no comparison with the works of his great master, Giambellino; but amongst the many ‘Cimas’ that are to be found in galleries there are not a few that by their tranquil beauty and their warm sunshine appeal very strongly to the unsophisticated, and even the flower-sprout picture of the *Baptist and Four Saints* in Madonna dell’ Orto—a first assay, it is said, in oils, and condemned for inaccurate drawing—lives in the memory of many who know Venice.

Carpaccio was a pupil, or perhaps only an admirer (possibly the companion at Constantinople), of Gentile Bellini. Both of them were by preference ‘subject painters.’ Gentile Bellini’s *Mohammed II, Venetian Embassy in Constantinople* (Louvre), *Procession*, and *Preaching of St. Mark* (Brera) show—as also his celebrated historical pictures in the Doges’ Palace once showed—that there was at Venice quite as strong a tendency towards narrative and secular painting as can be observed anywhere else at the end of the Quattrocento.<sup>2</sup> In the same direction tended Carpaccio. His paintings have none of the exquisite finish and harmony and sunshine of the Bellini school. He is rough and careless—sometimes almost coarse—but there is a wonderful vigour in his compositions. His most important works are the exceedingly dramatic and pictorial nine canvases (now in the Accademia) on which he depicted the legend of St. Ursula,<sup>3</sup> and the even more masterly, but in conception and in treatment sometimes painfully master-

<sup>1</sup> So Morelli and Crowe and Cavalcaselle.

<sup>2</sup> In Botticelli’s *Venus*, etc., we have classical subjects, in Leonardo’s and Michelangelo’s designs for the Palazzo Vecchio we have secular, in Pinturicchio’s Piccolomini frescos at Siena and in Benozzo Gozzoli we have semi-religious portraiture and narrative—but such things are comparatively rare. The historical and mythological frescos in the Vatican *Stanze* were not painted by Raphael and his disciples till after Gentile’s death in 1507.

<sup>3</sup> Especially fine and interesting is the *Reception of the English Embassy by King Maurus*.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

ful and ungentle, paintings commemorating St. George, St. Jerome, and St. Triphon, that every reader of *St. Mark's Rest* is sure to visit in the 'Shrine of the Slaves,' as Ruskin calls the little chapel or school of the Slavonians (Dalmatians) near the Venetian Arsenal.

The connexion between Carpaccio and the founder of the great Venetian school of the next century—namely, Giorgione—will be considered when we arrive at the art of the Cinquecento.

(4) **Emilia<sup>1</sup> and Lombardy.** Of Quattrocento painters who were natives of Emilian cities the greatest are Melozzo of Forli (1438-1494) and Francia of Bologna (1450-1517). Greater, it is true, than both was Mantegna, who, though he lived till he was 30 mostly at Padua and Venice,<sup>2</sup> was occupied for over 40 years at Mantua—and Mantua, as Verona, although annexed by Venice in 1405, had remained more Lombard, or Emilian, than Venetian. So this great Paduan-Mantuan painter, who influenced not only Venetian and German but also Emilian and Umbrian art, is somewhat difficult to class.

Melozzo of Forli, whose Roman frescos have been described elsewhere (p. 244), was at first perhaps a pupil of Mantegna. Mantegna's influence is clearly shown in the extremely violent foreshortenings of the famous apse and ceiling frescos in SS. Apostoli, the remnants of which (including the well-known music-making angels) are still to be seen in the Sacristy of St. Peter's. But he became a great friend of Piero della Francesca and an admirer of his style. The two were probably at Urbino together when Fig. 39 was painted, and when

<sup>1</sup> L' Emilia, the Latin Aemilia, was so called from the Via Aemilia, running from Rimini to Piacenza. The southern regions of Emilia formed later (from c. 850) a part of that Romagna (Romania), the province of Ravenna, claimed by the Popes and often mentioned by Dante. Hence some of these painters of Emilia and the Marche are also called 'Romagnoli.'

<sup>2</sup> Squarcione, whose pupil he was at Padua, fell foul of him when he married Jacopo Bellini's daughter and won fame and influence at Venice. Mantegna's chief characteristics are great mastery in perspective and foreshortening, wonderful colour and a rich magnificence in classical decoration, tending to heaviness, as seen in the splendid *Ancona* in S. Zeno, Verona. For other works see List of Artists.



## A R T. (1400-1500)

Melozzo produced for Duke Frederic the fine allegorical figures two of which (*Music* and *Rhetoric*) we possess in our National Gallery. Another exceedingly beautiful figure is that of Gabriel in the *Annunciation* lately discovered and now in the Uffizi. It is also very characteristic of Melozzo's love of vigour and movement, for the angel is depicted as evidently just alighting—almost breathless and scarce able to restrain his forward motion.

Francia of Bologna (Melozzo's junior—nearly a contemporary of Perugino, Botticelli, Ghirlandaio, and Leonardo da Vinci) first became famous as goldsmith and medallist. In painting he adopted more and more a simple and severe style, renouncing all the magnificent apparatus of splendid thrones and marble reliefs and garlands so dear to Mantegna. His easel pictures, many of which are to be seen in the Bologna Accademia and in other galleries, appeal to one by their simple, unaffected composition and their unambitious, restful spirit. A great friend of Francia's was Costa, known as the 'Ferrarese Perugino.' The story of Vasari that Francia 'died of melancholy' after seeing Raphael's *St. Cecilia* (painted about 1515) seems contradicted by the facts that he addressed a most affectionate sonnet to his young rival, prophesying his future fame, and that Raphael wrote a letter full of admiration for the *belle e devote Madonne* of the old Bolognese artist.

The painters of Lombardy before the coming of Leonardo da Vinci to Milan (c. 1482) are not of great importance. In the chapter on Milan I have mentioned Foppa and others. They practised a local style of 'serious and severe aesthetic sentiment,' as Ricci calls it, which had some influence on Leonardo—perhaps benignly moderating his bent towards that 'sweetness' the danger of which, says Mr. Berenson, was overcome in him by his 'sovereign power over form,' but wrought mischief among his followers.

(5) **Rome and Naples** were already in the Quattrocento, as we have seen, the temporary homes of some great artists, but neither they nor any other city or region of South Italy produced until later any really notable painters, with one

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

exception—namely that Antonello of Messina whose perhaps legendary importation of oil-painting from Flanders into Venetia has already occupied our attention. His works are rare. His portraits (two at Milan) are very striking indeed as realistic reproductions of the human face.

### SCULPTURE

It will be seen that in the List of Artists (p. 605) I have indicated various periods into which the evolution of Italian art may be divided, namely, (1) *Pre-Renaissance*, till 1425; (2) *Early Renaissance*, 1425–1470; (3) *Middle Renaissance*, 1470–1500; (4) *High, classical, Renaissance*, 1500–1550, followed by rapid decline;<sup>1</sup> then, towards the end of the century, a revival, beautiful, transient, illusory, like an after-glow. These divisions do not apply accurately to all three arts of painting, sculpture, and architecture, nor to all parts of Italy alike. Far less accurately do they apply to other countries. But they conveniently map out the subject discussed in the chapters on art. In the present section, for instance, we have to consider mainly the sculpture of the Early and Middle Italian Renaissance, and shall find ourselves occupied mainly with Tuscan sculptors.

We have already noted that the new Tuscan sculpture, even in the days of Niccolò and Giovanni Pisano, was no mere imitation of ancient models. It drew its sap, so to speak, from the old stock, but was a new graft; and later we find, as it were, a luxuriant outgrowth from many and various grafts—for there are specific differences between not a few of the Quattrocento sculptors. Thus Della Quercia seems to anticipate Michelangelo in strength and in a beauty that is the creation of strength; Ghiberti we might almost call, at least as regards his later work, a painter in bronze; Donatello's vivid, vigorous naturalism has an undeniable originality;

<sup>1</sup> Michelangelo outlived the beginning of this decline, to which he had doubtless contributed. He died in 1564—and in the same year modern science was born in the person of Galileo.



44. HYGIEIA DEL CARRETTO, BY DELLA QUERCIA





45. ST. GEORGE, BY DONATELLO



## ART (1400-1500)

some of Verrocchio's characteristics—that intensity, for instance, that we see in the *David*, and that mastery in equestrian sculpture that is proved by the *Colleone*—were potent influences that modified the unique genius of Leonardo da Vinci; nor should we forget the two great Della Robbias, whose works, entirely unaffected by 'classicism,' manifest a spirit almost Greek in its power of creating things of beauty.<sup>1</sup>

Between Orcagna and the Quattrocento we have, as has been noted in the case of painting, a barren interval of about 30 years, but about the beginning of the century we find a splendid group of young artists, destined to initiate the great Early Renaissance school of sculpture. The chief of these were Della Quercia, Brunelleschi, Ghiberti, and Donatello. They were soon to be followed by Luca della Robbia and the Rossellini, and then by Desiderio of Settignano, Mino of Fiesole, Verrocchio, Andrea della Robbia, and Benedetto of Maiano. A few words about each of these artists may help to show how they fit in with the historical events of their age, and of what nature and value are their works.

Della Quercia of Siena, nicknamed 'Jacopo della Fonte,' spent ten years (1409-1419) in designing and making the famous, now restored, fountain, Fonte Gaia, in the *piazza* of the Sienese Palazzo Pubblico.<sup>2</sup> The power and dramatic action of these reliefs, which depicted the Creation of Man, the Expulsion from Eden, and other such subjects, may be still noted in the relics of the originals preserved in the Opera del Duomo.

Another important work, which occupied him probably still longer (c. 1425-1438), was an extensive series of smaller reliefs carved in similar style on the pilasters and pediment of the great church of S. Petronio in Bologna. But perhaps the best known of his creations is one of his earliest works—the

The art of Luca della Robbia may be a heritage of the ancient Etruscan (or perhaps Aegaeon) sense of beauty of form.

<sup>2</sup> According to Vasari the date of the Fonte Gaia is 1431! He also attributes a north portal of the Florentine Duomo to Della Quercia.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

monument in the cathedral of Lucca to Ilaria, wife of one of the turbulent, cut-throat Guinigi. The gracious, recumbent figure draped in its simple robe, with its peaceful, gentle face and eyes closed in death—reminding one of a lily broken by the wind and beginning to fade—is the first revelation of supreme beauty by Renaissance sculpture.

Brunelleschi will occupy our attention as a very great architect. There are, however, two interesting sculptural works of his, one of which is highly important because it was the cause of his momentous decision to abandon sculpture and to betake himself to Rome in order to study architecture. There is in S. Croce a large wooden crucifix by Donatello—its figure about life-size—and another, somewhat similar, by Brunelleschi, in S. Maria Novella, near Orcagna's wondrous frescos. Donatello, Vasari says, asked his friend's opinion about this crucifix of his, and when Brunelleschi, rather unkindly, told him he had put a *contadino* on the Cross instead of a Christ, he replied, 'Take thou wood and make one thyself!' This Brunelleschi did, secretly, and when Donatello saw it he let drop, from pure amazement, an apronful of eggs and other market-stuff that he was carrying. Brunelleschi's other sculpture may be seen in the Bargello. It is the bronze relief, depicting the Sacrifice of Abraham, which he offered as competitor against several artists, including Della Quercia, when the second bronze doors of the Baptistery were to be made. Ghiberti's relief, which won the competition, hangs near that of Brunelleschi, and certainly excels it in sculpturesque repose and in the beauty of its outlines. It will be remembered that one of the judges on this occasion was Giovanni di Bicci, one of the very early Medici.

Ghiberti and his two famous doors of the Baptistery we have had occasion to discuss already (see p. 191 and Fig. 14), and have noted their very striking differences. It will be remembered that Andrea Pisano (c. 1330-36) made the first of the three splendid bronze doors that still adorn the Florentine Baptistery, and that, as just mentioned, Ghiberti was chosen (1402) to make the second. In this second door he retained

## ART (1400-1500)

the simple and noble style used 70 years before (Fig. 13) by Andrea, and except for a certain grace in composition and beauty in outline the work has all the character of Early Pre-Renaissance art. But so great is the difference between this early bronze door of his and the later, which he began almost at once after completing the first, that very evidently by this time a most momentous change had taken place in his ideas—as in those of others, especially of Donatello—in regard to the end and methods of sculpture. So strikingly do these two works of Ghiberti illustrate this momentous change that the year 1425, in which his later door was begun, may well be accepted as that from which we may date the new era in sculpture—the era of the Renaissance. The beauty of these bronzen reliefs is easier felt than described. One may talk sentimentally of their loveliness, or learnedly of the wondrous impression that they give of magnitude and space, and distance ; one may affirm that the perspective is so perfect and the art in relief so consummate that in no other work of this nature such depth is produced and so numerous figures are introduced without any sensation of undue crowding . . . and so on. But *il lungo studio e il grande amore* will in this case, as in most others, make one stand aside and let people form their own opinions, merely observing that it may be well not to criticize hastily a work on which Ghiberti spent more than a quarter of a century, and of which Michelangelo said that it was worthy to adorn the Gate of Paradise. Other sculptures of his are rare. Among them are three fine bronze statues (*John the Baptist*, *St. Matthew*, and *St. Stephen*) that still adorn the outside of the church Orsanmichele. A fact that connects Ghiberti with historical events is that for Pope Eugenius IV, on the occasion of the Florentine Council of 1439, of which we have heard so much, he made a tiara worth 30,000 gold ducats, and containing, it is said, no less than 5½ lb. of pearls and jewels.

Donatello in sculpture, as Brunelleschi in architecture, offers the most conspicuous example of that new and vital development which we have likened to a luxuriant graft flourishing on the still vigorous, deep-rooted stock of ancient art. His

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

genius—a heritage perhaps from Etruscan (Aegean ?) ancestors—was audaciously original and impelled him towards a realistic naturalism which, as we have seen in some of the more original Quattrocento painters, was apt to result in a display of strength without beauty. But his sensitive artistic nature was deeply influenced by the beauty and nobility of ancient art, so that in his finest works we have a combination of grace and power that makes him the equal of Michelangelo—whom indeed perhaps he excels in that he wins us oftener by human sympathy instead of overwhelming us by gigantesque *terribilità*.

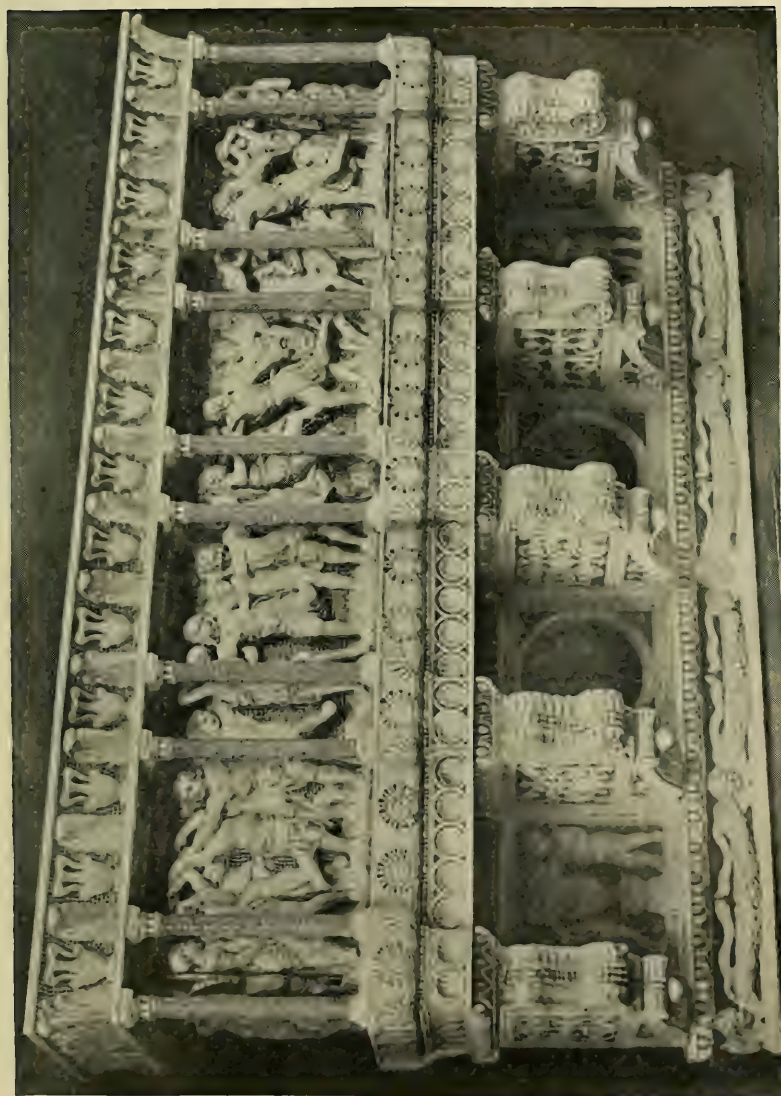
The greatness of Donatello is apparent from the fact that he was the first Italian who restored sculpture to its dignity as an independent art. Hitherto Italian sculpture had been the *ancilla* of architecture. It is true that, besides ancient sculptures, statues in the round already existed—e.g. many statues of saints and Popes, and even equestrian statues, as of the Scaligers at Verona, St. Martin at Lucca, etc.—but they were, as were also the effigies on tombs, such as the Ilaria of Della Quercia, almost as subservient to decorative or other needs of architecture as were reliefs. The *David* of Donatello was the first statue made in Italy for about a thousand years that was an independent work of art.<sup>1</sup>

The chief works of Donatello are: the beautiful *Annunciation*, a *pietra serena* relief in S. Croce—perhaps one of his earliest creations (c. 1408 ? others say c. 1425) ; *St. Peter* (?) and *St. Mark* (c. 1413) and the celebrated *St. George* (1415–1416), on the outside of Orsanmichele (see Fig. 45) ; statues on Giotto's Campanile, of which the *Zuccone*, or 'Baldpate,' is perhaps the best known ; <sup>2</sup> the *David* (Fig. 47 (a)), and the *Judith*, both made (c. 1432 and 1440) for Cosimo and at

<sup>1</sup> 'The first modern, isolated, *nude* statue,' say Natali and Vitelli. But its nudity seems an accidental quality. All statues since the extinction of ancient art, even those made by Donatello himself for Orsanmichele, were intended for certain surroundings, to be regarded from a certain point of view. The *St. George*, now in the Bargello, has had to be provided with an imitation of his original niche. But the *David* needs no setting and is viewed equally well from all points.

<sup>2</sup> A special favourite of Donatello's. When working at it, says Vasari, he used to exclaim, 'Talk ! Talk !'





16. 'CANTORIA,' BY DONATELLO



47. (a) DAVID, BY DONATELLO



(b) DAVID, BY VERROCCHIO

## ART (1400-1500)

first placed in the cortile of that new and sumptuous palace (now the Riccardi) the erection of which was perhaps one cause of his banishment; the indescribably beautiful *Cantoria* (Fig. 46); the splendid bronze equestrian statue, at Padua, of Gattamelata (p. 281 *n.*). The bronze reliefs on the S. Lorenzo pulpit, designed by Donatello when an old man of about 75, and executed mainly by his pupils, are overwrought and theatrical and by no means so attractive as a much earlier work of his, namely the dancing *putti* on the curious external pulpit of Prato Cathedral.

Luca della Robbia (1400-1482) produced one great work of sculptured marble—the splendid *Cantoria* (choir gallery) made in 1431 for the Florentine Cathedral, and now preserved, together with the above-mentioned similar gallery by Donatello, in the Opera del Duomo—and late in life together with Michelozzo he made the fine bronze doors of the New Sacristy that saved the life of Lorenzo de' Medici; but he is chiefly famous for his numerous and often indescribably lovely high reliefs in terracotta covered with a glaze, the composition of which was discovered, or rediscovered, by him and divulged as a secret to his pupils. The figures of Luca's reliefs are generally of a pure white, with very few details indicated in colour, against a background of beautiful blue. The subjects are almost always religious, and among the loveliest of these works are those which represent the Virgin adoring her Child. Apparently Luca was quite untouched by the Classical Revival and all the *Sturm und Drang* of the Renaissance; but his purely religious and purely Italian art possesses far more of that repose which characterizes Greek sculpture than is to be found in Donatello.<sup>1</sup> When gazing at a 'Luca' or an 'Andrea' one often finds oneself reminded of some pathetic Attic *stele* (tombstone) or of the Parthenon frieze. Andrea della Robbia added to the somewhat severe style of his uncle an exquisite grace. He introduced colour rather more freely, especially in

<sup>1</sup> The unrest latent even in the dignified *St. George* is revealed by the exclamation of Michelangelo when he first saw the statue, namely, 'March!'

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

the rich mouldings of flowers and fruits that he used as framework (Fig. 48). Every one knows his delightful *putti* (figures of small children) which adorn the front of Brunelleschi's Ospedale degli Innocenti (Foundlings' Hospital) in Florence. Some most beautiful Madonnas are to be seen in the Museo Nazionale; and in many and many a country church in Tuscany one is shown so-called 'Della Robbias,' not a few of which are doubtless by Luca or Andrea, or by Andrea's son, Giovanni. The works of Giovanni are very numerous. They show a great falling off in repose and dignity. Prettiness takes the place of loveliness. Colours, too, are used without much artistic restraint—so that at times the effect is almost that produced by a market-garden exhibition. One really fine and original work by Giovanni exists—*The Seven Works of Mercy*, an extensive, vividly coloured frieze on the Ospedale del Ceppo at Pistoia. It dates from his last years (1525–1529), and is in a style, very realistic and dramatic, entirely different from ordinary 'Della Robbias.'

Verrocchio has been already mentioned as a painter and as the master of Leonardo da Vinci. As sculptor, he was Donatello's best pupil. But his genius was very different from that of his master. What Vasari, displaying his utter incapacity as an art critic, calls the 'unoriginal, painfully acquired, *maniera dura e crudetta*' of Verrocchio was due to what we may perhaps call his *idealism*—to his instinctive rejection of the superfluous and the sensuously attractive—and to the possession of a 'sovereign power over form' such as was vouchsafed still more fully to his pupil Leonardo. The trend of his genius is shown by his choice of bronze instead of marble, bronze favouring the representation of keen, lithe, sinewy energy in form and feature rather than that Junonian beauty and heavy-limbed Herculean grandeur which such sculptors as Michelangelo attain in marble. In the *Doubting Thomas* (outside Orsanmichele) this characteristic is neutralized greatly by the heavy drapery, but in the *David* (Fig. 47) one recognizes it unmistakably; and the equestrian statue of Colleone is probably the finest work—the most

420



## ART (1400-1500)

Greek in its self-restrained power—ever produced by any modern artist in bronze.<sup>1</sup>

Besides these eight there were other Tuscan sculptors, some of whom, though clever craftsmen rather than great artists—being more or less blind to the real nature and function of sculpture—did valuable service; for they carried the new enthusiasm and the new technique to other regions of Italy, and in Tuscany they have left us a number of exceedingly charming monuments.

Bernardo Rossellini (c. 1409-1464), besides being a distinguished architect, designed some fine architectural tombs. Of these the best is the tomb of the famous scholar Leonardo Bruni (in S. Croce). It is probably the first example of the well-known type of Renaissance tomb in which the sarcophagus and the reclining figure are surmounted by a deep classic arch in the place of a Gothic tabernacle or curtains (as in the Cosmati tombs. See also Fig. 36). Bernardo's brother, Antonio, was more of a sculptor than an architect. His best-known work is the tomb of the youthful Infante Cardinal James of Portugal in the church of S. Miniato. It was probably Antonio, though some think it was Bernardo, who carved the very attractive *tondo* of the *Madonna del Latte* which is above the tomb of the faithful Medicean adherent, Nori, in S. Croce (p. 325 *n.*).

Desiderio of Settignano (1428-1464) was the first of a school of Florentine sculptors whose highest quality is gracefulness. His best work is the tomb of Carlo Marsuppini in S. Croce. His Chapel of the Sacrament in S. Lorenzo is regarded as one of the finest specimens of 'graceful ornamentation.' Mino of Fiesole (1431-1484) is lauded by Vasari for having excelled the founder of the school in tasteful elegance; but Vasari was incapable of seeing that Mino's superiority consisted in a real sense for true classic form. This is recognizable in many of the beautiful tombs that he designed—for he, like

<sup>1</sup> Possibly designed partly by Leonardo. Cast by Leopardi. See note to Fig. 24. Two minor works of Verrocchio are (1) the simple but beautiful tomb of Piero Gottoso and his brother, Giovanni, in S. Lorenzo (Old Sacristy) and the well-known *puttino* with the fish in the court of the Palazzo Vecchio.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

others of this group of sculptors, produced little else but busts and tombs and decorative reliefs. In the Florentine Badia we have three of his monuments, that of the famous Marquis Ugo being the most interesting (*Medieval Italy*, p. 429), and in Rome he produced, as well as much else, the tomb <sup>1</sup> of Paul II (in the *Grotte* of St. Peter's), and that of Cardinal della Rovere (S. M. del Popolo), and that of Cardinal Pietro Riario (SS. Apostoli).

The two brothers Giuliano and Benedetto of the village Maiano, between Fiesole and Settignano, are especially of importance as the architects of the Porta Capuana and the Strozzi Palace, but they were also sculptors; and Benedetto's pulpit in S. Croce, with its five reliefs, in the style of Ghiberti, depicting scenes from the life of St. Francis of Assisi, is often called the most beautiful Renaissance pulpit in Italy. Among a number of tombs and other works by Benedetto (at Florence, Prato, Siena, Faenza, etc.) one, the reredos to the altar of S. Bartoldo in S. Agostino at S. Gimignano, is exceedingly beautiful, though the figures may be rather too 'graceful.'

Another notable Tuscan sculptor of this period was Civitali of Lucca (1435-1501), whose works in the cathedrals of Lucca and of Genoa (especially his statues of Adam and Eve at Genoa) show something more than mere elegance—something like originality and some real perception of the true function of sculpture.

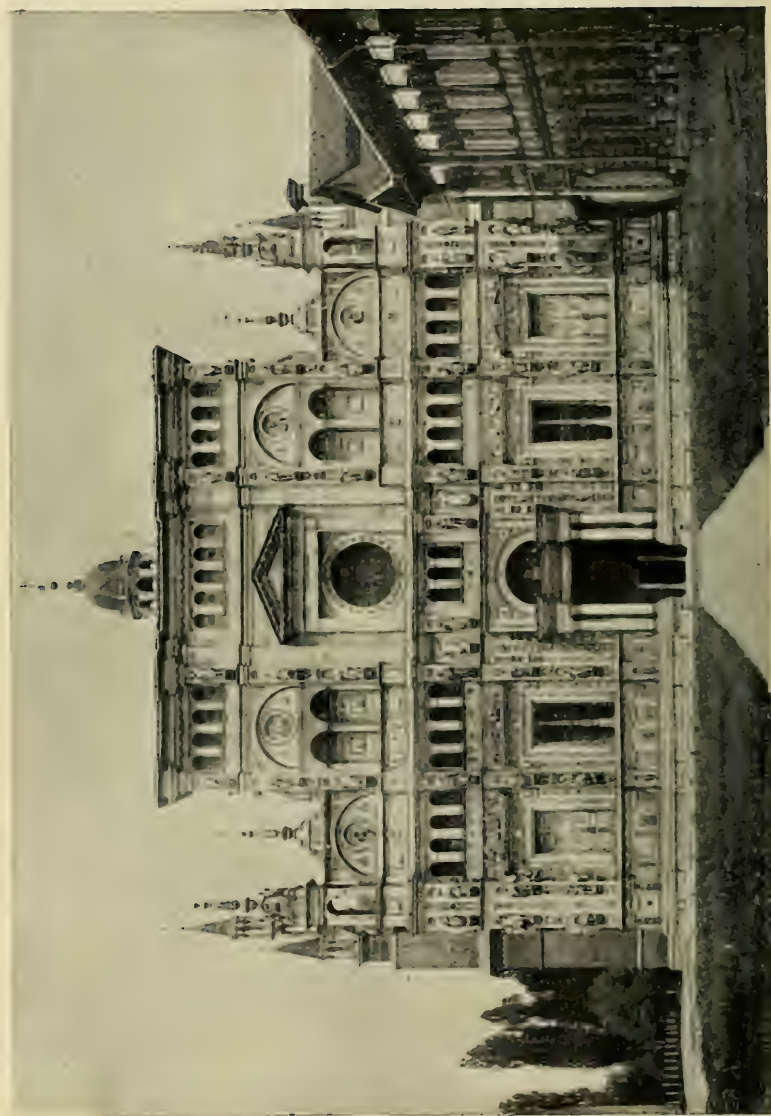
The South of Italy at this period produced scarcely any native art, but was beginning to attract artists. At Rome, besides Mino of Fiesole, we hear of Mino dal Regno (from the Neapolitan 'Regno'), with whom he is sometimes confused. Also the Florentine Antonio del Pollaiuolo—an exquisite goldsmith, a fine medallist, a good second-class painter, and a first-class expert in anatomy <sup>2</sup>—is notable as sculptor on account of the two great bronze monuments which he made

<sup>1</sup> Also perhaps the bust in the Palazzo Venezia, Rome. Some 30 years before Mino we hear of the Florentine sculptor Filarete at Rome, where he made the famous bronze doors of St. Peter's.

<sup>2</sup> See the description of his (or Piero's) Pazzi conspiracy medal, p. 327.



48. MADONNA AND CHILD, BY ANDREA DELLA ROBBIÀ



49. THE CERTOSA OF PAVIA



## ART (1400-1500)

(in St. Peter's) for Sixtus IV and Innocent VIII—the last in co-operation with his brother Piero. At Naples Giuliano da Maiano perhaps aided (c. 1455) other northern artists in the building and decoration of Alfonso's triumphal arch (Fig. 23). He also designed the fine Porta Capuana, erected by Ferdinand I about 1485.

At Milan we have, towards the end of the Quattrocento, the sculptor Solari, notable for his monument of Lodovico il Moro and Beatrice (Fig. 26), and Pietro di Martino, who made his name at Naples as architect and sculptor in connexion with the magnificent arch of Alfonso I before mentioned.

Finally, at Venice during the Quattrocento, besides a Niccolò of Arezzo who superintended the external sculptures of St. Mark's, and the two Florentines who made the tomb of Tommaso Mocenigo (Fig. 36 (b)), we find a number of Lombard sculptors, whose headquarters were the Cà d'oro. Of these Rizzo of Verona is best known.<sup>1</sup> He made the statues of Adam and Eve that stand opposite the 'Giants' Staircase,' and the very fine monument to Doge Tron (d. 1473) in the Frari church. Then there was Pietro Lombardo—Peter the Lombard—who, together with his relations or comrades, distinguished himself in architecture (see next section), and was one of those sculptors who made Venice towards the end of the Quattrocento celebrated for its magnificent monuments to Doges and other great personalities. His mausoleum, with 15 statues, of Doge Pietro Mocenigo (d. 1476) in Santi Giovanni e Paolo is very impressive, and the tomb that some two years later he, aided by Leopardi, made for Doge Vendramin (Fig. 36) is assuredly fine, in spite of Ruskin's withering sarcasm as to its 'insincerity.' Leopardi also undertook the casting of Verrocchio's splendid equestrian statue of Colleone, which stands before this 'Venetian Santa Croce' (Giovanni e Paolo—or 'Zanipolo'), and probably designed and executed the fine pedestal on which it was placed. He also made the three great bronzen bases for flagstaffs that are to be seen in front of St. Mark's.

<sup>1</sup> There were several of this name, which is perhaps a nickname (= *Riccio*, 'Curly-pate').

# ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

## ARCHITECTURE

Great Italian architecture of the Quattrocento comprises—firstly, the work of Florentine builders in Florence, Milan, Rome, and Naples ; secondly, that of Luciano da Laurana and others at Urbino ; thirdly, that of Bramante (of Urbino) and others in Milan ; fourthly, that of the architects of the Pavian Certosa façade, and of like work at Como, etc. ; fifthly, that of the Lombardi and others at Venice.

(1) Florentine Quattrocento architecture is of three distinct kinds. First we have a new, vital, truly Italian style of great beauty and originality—that shown by the best works of Brunelleschi and Michelozzo. This work is so far from being a resuscitation or imitation of ancient architecture that the very word ‘ Renaissance,’ in the sense of Rebirth, has not the usual application in its case. Secondly, there is an architecture which is exemplified especially by three great Florentine palaces of this period—the Pitti, the Strozzi, and the Medici (Riccardi). Also this architecture is in no wise a resuscitation of the ancient Roman. In its massiveness and its use of huge, sometimes almost Cyclopean and rough-dressed, projecting blocks (*rustica* work) it may far more reasonably be regarded as a revival of the ancient Etruscan. Thirdly, we have the classic, imitative work of the Florentine Alberti—not at Florence itself, where his Rucellai Palace and the portal of S. Maria Novella are examples rather of his Italian than of his classic tendencies—but at Rimini, Mantua, and elsewhere. In these classic imitations of his we have the real beginning of that classic Renaissance architecture which towards the end of the century gained the mastery, and during the Cinquecento, after a short period of grandeur, developed grandiosity and extravagance, degenerated into absurdity, and ultimately died away amid vapid affectation.

The first of these Florentine schools—that which Brunelleschi founded—went back to the main principles of Romanesque, but instead of Romanesque decoration—which was mostly

## ART (1400-1500)

wanting in true artistic beauty and was indeed often Northern, barbaric, and grotesque—it adopted that of classical architecture. The versatile characteristics of the pointed arch were now transfused into the round, the lightness and delicacy of Gothic (that ‘triumph of the void’) being combined with Romanesque dignity—even with Roman austerity.<sup>1</sup> Single, free, slight columns supporting high round arches (a type first met with in Italy at S. Costanza, Rome) form perhaps the chief constructive feature and show—as does the best Romanesque—an almost Grecian sense for grace and exquisite proportion. But the ornamentation is often purely Roman, Roman mouldings, wreaths, candelabra, and barrel-vaulting being found together with groined Gothic. The capitals, at first Corinthian, adopt later Composite characteristics, *e.g.* volutes, and one or two rows of a stiffly upright but gracefully outlined acanthus. The dome is generally Byzantine or Romanesque, with pendentives—an exception being Brunelleschi’s famous *Cupolone* of the Florentine Cathedral, the plan of which, with its slightly pointed double dome, formed by two concentric cupolas and supported by eight great ribs, is rather Gothic than Romanesque.

Brunelleschi (1377-1446) has occupied our attention on several occasions already. We have heard how at first he was rather a sculptor than an architect, but how the preference given (1403) to Ghiberti’s design for the second bronze door of the Baptistery induced him to renounce sculpture and to migrate to Rome (perhaps with Donatello), where he studied architecture, examining zealously ancient buildings, for about 15 years. On his return in 1418 he was entrusted with the building of the dome of the Cathedral, and soon afterwards

<sup>1</sup> Note the rapid and almost entire disappearance of Gothic on the advent of the new style. The essential differences and diverse possibilities of the pointed and the round arch suggest questions of great interest. The pointed (or broken) arch, with its infinite variety, allows the solution of almost any structural problem. But this liberty (which has analogy to that of romantic literature) is apt to degenerate into licence, and the return of Italian art to the higher liberty that recognizes self-restraint and the sovereignty of eternal laws is significant of the same spirit that in the true Italian Gothic resisted the fatal Northern tendency to conceal or disfigure the beauty and nobility of structural form by extravagant decoration. See *Medieval Italy*, p. 529 sq.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

began the Foundlings' Hospital, Lo Spedale degli Innocenti, which is known to almost every visitor to Florence on account of Andrea della Robbia's medallions of *putti* inserted above the exquisitely proportioned arcade, if not for the much more important fact that it was the earliest work actually begun in the new and beautiful Florentine style of architecture, of which Brunelleschi was the founder. In 1420 he set to work at the dome of the Cathedral—a task that occupied him 14 years. During this period he erected in the cloisters of S. Croce the so-called Pazzi Chapel, in which he adopted a plan similar to that of certain ancient Roman temples, *e.g.* that of Concordia, on the Capitol. The fine portico has classic-Renaissance columns and entablature and Roman barrel-vaulting; the flattened dome, on pendentives, is Byzantine; but the new inspiration shows itself in a high arch that in a startling fashion breaks right through the classic entablature between two columns to form the main entrance of the portico—heralding in no uncertain tone the advent of a new and original architecture. This device is further developed in S. Lorenzo, which was rebuilt in the form of a basilica by Brunelleschi for Cosimo de' Medici and other nobles about 1425–1430. The entablature is here interrupted between all the columns, and the columns support arches which rest—not on the capitals, but on the relics of the interrupted architrave, frieze, and cornice. In S. Spirito, built *c.* 1436–1480 from Brunelleschi's designs,<sup>1</sup> this somewhat awkward device has been modified by simplifying the block of mutilated ancient entablature into a shapely and unadorned superstructure, like the old Byzantine *pulvino*, which is in perfect structural accord with both column and arch. The exquisite proportions that meet the eye on all sides within S. Spirito, and the wondrously beautiful effect produced by the continuation of the aisles round the transepts and the choir, forming a labyrinth of columns, make this church the most attractive of all in Florence, except perhaps S. Croce. The huge Pitti

<sup>1</sup> For the burning down of the old S. Spirito see p. 288; and for the *pulvino* see *Medieval Italy*, pp. 265, 268.



## ART (1400-1500)

Palace was also a creation of Brunelleschi. Its origin and its character are treated elsewhere.

Also the two great works of Michelozzo have been repeatedly mentioned—namely, the Medicean palace built for old Cosimo in the Via Larga (now the Palazzo Riccardi in the Via Cavour), and the very gracefully arcaded and vaulted Library of S. Marco, likewise due to the munificence of the *Pater Patriae*. In these edifices Michelozzo has left exceedingly fine specimens of the two chief methods of the new architecture—that in which slender columns sustain round arches and vaulting, and that which we may call the massive *rustica* style.<sup>1</sup>

Alberti's life and writings have already occupied our attention, and his principal architectural works have been mentioned. What interests us here especially is the fact that, as in literature, so also in architecture this extraordinary genius seems to have become a master equally great in ancient and in modern forms of expression. We have seen how powerfully his *Della Famiglia* contributed to the revival of native Italian literature, so that, in spite of his ten-volumed Latin *De re aedificatoria*, his literary influence tended towards a new creation. In building, on the contrary, it was his classical work—his resuscitation of Roman architecture—which, perhaps unfortunately, had a notable result. In Florence itself he seems to have been under the influence of the new creative spirit, which endowed the old forms with an original vitality. The Palazzo Rucellai, designed by him though erected by Bernardo Rossellini, shows for the first time the most effective combination of the 'Etruscan' style, such as we find in the Pitti, Medici, and Strozzi Palaces, with classic pilasters, and is in no wise a pedantic resuscitation, while the beautiful portal of S. Maria Novella, also designed by him and inserted amid the older Gothic work of the lower façade, has the exquisite proportions

<sup>1</sup> He also built the Medici Chapel in S. Croce, and probably the interesting Portinari Chapel in S. Eustorgio, Milan, and the Palazzo Portinari (seat of the Medicean Bank), also at Milan—of which last a very fine marble portal, with portrait relief of Francesco Sforza, is preserved in the National Museum (Castella Sforzesco). For Michelozzo at Venice with the exiled Cosimo see p. 311.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

and poetic character of Romanesque rather than the prosaic strength of genuine Roman work. But in the Tempio Malatestiano—a temple formed by Alberti from the church of S. Francesco for the semi-pagan Sigismondo, lord of Rimini, who dedicated it to his deified mistress<sup>1</sup>—we have interiorly a magnificent, but somewhat chaotic, accumulation of classic elements, while exteriorly the lower portion of the unfinished façade is a very fine, genuinely Roman structure, of a type like that of the Arch of Constantine. Finally, the church of S. Andrea at Mantua, erected from Alberti's designs after his death (1472–1512), shows further relapse towards a pedantic classicism. Its ponderous and unlovely front, though of fine proportions, is like a bad dream of some splendid Roman arch or temple. The great nave with its enormous piers and barrel-vaulting, flanked by chapels alternately large and small, was evidently the model that Bramante accepted for the new St. Peter's at Rome.<sup>2</sup>

Benedetto da Maiano, whom we already know as sculptor, has left a great work of architecture—the Strozzi Palace in Florence, of the same type as the Palazzo Medici. For the work of his brother, Giuliano, at Naples see Fig. 23.

At Rome, besides Alberti, about 1450, we find—notable as the first designer of the new St. Peter's—Bernardo Rossellini, whose beautiful Florentine tombs have been described; and Meo of Settignano, who—and not the Florentine Pontelli—is now accredited with S. Pietro in Montorio, S. Maria della Pace (famed for Raphael's Sibyls), the Ponte Sisto, and other buildings erected in the pontificate of Sisto IV. At Rome also worked the brothers Giuliano and Antonio da Sangallo—until the days of Leo X. The former is specially remembered as a designer of the new St. Peter's at Rome, and as the builder of Lorenzo il Magnifico's villa of Poggio a

<sup>1</sup> Under the name *diva Isotta*. He had, it is believed, murdered his first two wives. The 'Temple' contains the tombs of many scholars and artists whom he employed to glorify his mistress. Artists 'adorned the temple with lascivious sculptures and profane sacred pictures' (Natali and Vitelli).

<sup>2</sup> The design of the grand Palazzo Venezia at Rome is sometimes attributed to Alberti, but this is very uncertain.

## A R T (1400-1500)

Caiano, celebrated in Poliziano's *Ambra*, and the latter for a fine church (Madonna di San Biaggio) at Poliziano's birthplace, Montepulciano.

(2) Urbino, Raphael's home, was also the home of Bramante, who at Rome became the real founder of that classical Cinquecento architecture which Alberti's work had heralded. As we have seen, Frederic of Montefeltro, who in 1444 (the year of Bramante's birth) became lord of Urbino and reigned till 1482, one year before Raphael's birth—for the last eight years as Duke—was a great patron of literature and the arts. About 1468 he commissioned an architect named Luciano Laurana to build a palace for him at Urbino. Laurana came from Dalmatia—a country in which existed, and still exists, one of the finest and most interesting relics of late Roman architecture, namely Diocletian's great villa at Spalato. The palace—'considered by many the most beautiful in all Italy,' as says Castiglione in the *Cortegiano*—was erected during the years 1468 to 1482 under the supervision of Frederic. It displays great skill in the adaptation of the original features of Brunelleschi's style to the principles of ancient architecture.<sup>1</sup>

(3) Bramante doubtless derived his celebrated style mainly from the work of Laurana, under whom he probably studied as a young man at Urbino. About 1472 he began to reside at Milan. Here up to the middle of the century the Lombard-Gothic had held its ground. Then came two Florentines, Filarete and Michelozzo, and, about 1450-1470, introduced the new style in connexion with the Castello and the Ospedale Maggiore; and now came Bramante, and soon (1482—a year before Raphael's birth) came also Leonardo da Vinci. For 30 years—before removing to Rome—Bramante exercised great influence at Milan. His most important works were the dome, transept, and choir of S. Maria delle Grazie, originally designed by Solari. Under this dome of Bramante's Beatrice d'Este was buried in 1497—the year in which, in the refectory of the adjacent monastery, Leonardo's *Last Supper* was being finished.

<sup>1</sup> Especially fine is the cortile of the palace at Urbino, and of another at Gubbio.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

As we shall see later, the period of Bramante's most celebrated works began after his arrival at Rome in the first year of the Cinquecento.

(4) The façade of the Certosa near Pavia offers the most magnificent and interesting example of the Lombard variety of the new architecture of the later Quattrocento—very different from Brunelleschi's Florentine variety, but quite as original, and as a true outgrowth quite as superior as the Florentine to that extravagant imitative classicism which ere long was to stifle both in its coils, like some gigantic parasite.

This Carthusian monastery was begun by Gian Galeazzo Visconti (the 'Viper of Milan' *par excellence*) in 1396. The interior of the church is mainly Gothic—a style that dominated Lombardy for about two centuries; the outside of the vast pile displays a variety of Lombard-Romanesque, with beautiful decorative arcades. Most of the monastery was completed early in the Quattrocento, and the cloisters show arcades not unlike those of Brunelleschi at Florence. About 1473 (the year after Bramante's advent to Milan) the façade was begun by the two brothers Mantegazza and a young architect named Amadeo. The lower half was finished by about 1492; the upper was added rather later, perhaps by Solari (see Fig. 49), the sculptor of the Moro's monument (p. 423).

Other examples of Lombard Quattrocento architecture are the rather extravagantly decorative Cappella Colleoni at Bergamo, erected for the great *condottiere* by the above-mentioned Amadeo, and the exceedingly beautiful Como Cathedral. The transepts and apse of this church show a Lombard-Romanesque style somewhat similar to that of the Pavian Certosa, with which it is contemporaneous.

(5) Venetian Quattrocento architecture has been slightly outlined in a former chapter (pp. 360–1), and some of its chief Gothic and Early Renaissance buildings and monuments have been mentioned in connexion with various great Doges or other important personages, as well as with various political events. It will be remembered that towards the latter part of the century Venice had passed the meridian of its glory and

430



## ART (1400-1500)

was beginning a long and disastrous, but heroic, struggle against the Turks, and also against the furious hostility of many Christian states, which finally allied together with the determination to annihilate her empire; but she was still perhaps the most powerful maritime state of Europe. She held much of the Near East in fee, and her *terra ferma* dominion in Italy extended over no small part of Lombardy; the splendour and the unique character of her older churches and palaces, Venetian-Byzantine, Venetian-Romanesque, and Venetian-Gothic, had long exercised a special charm on the imagination of men, and until the middle of the Quattrocento the new architecture, already far developed in other parts of Italy, had failed to win its way to favour. The first who succeeded in introducing it—to a small extent—were, as was natural, natives of Lombard cities which owned allegiance to the Venetian Republic.<sup>1</sup> We find several architects named 'Lombardi'—evidently members of some family or fraternity of Lombard artists. Of these the most famous, Pietro Lombardi, constructed (c. 1480) S. Maria dei Miracoli, which shows the usual Venetian love of coloured marble decoration but in other respects reminds one of the Certosa façade, Como Cathedral, and other Lombard Quattrocento buildings. Pietro also, probably, built the fine Palazzo Vendramin and the beautiful portal, if not other parts, of the celebrated façade of the Scuola di San Marco, remarkable for its curious perspective reliefs. Both Pietro Lombardi and the somewhat earlier Veronese architect, Rizzo—one of divers Rizzi or Ricci, or 'Curly-pates'—have been mentioned as notable Venetian sculptors.

Finally, in connexion with the somewhat rare Venetian Quattrocento Renaissance architecture should be mentioned

<sup>1</sup> A solitary instance, it seems, of direct importation of the Brunelleschi style was the work of Michelozzo in connexion with the library of the S. Giorgio Maggiore Convent, but this was perhaps limited to certain internal arrangements (see p. 311). The beautiful Porta della Carta (by the elder Bart. Buon, c. 1440), opposite the Giants' Stair, is a striking example of the introduction into Gothic of classical characteristics, such as the pretty little Cupids. S. Zaccaria offers another example.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

the exceedingly beautiful Palazzo del Consiglio at Verona. It possesses an arcaded front which rivals in its proportions the best work of Brunelleschi. The arcade is surmounted by a quasi-classic façade, also of fine proportions, in which are inserted windows of exquisitely graceful form reminding one of the loveliest products of Lombard-Romanesque. The builder of this Palazzo del Consiglio was probably Fra Giocondo of Verona, that mysterious Dominican friar who as antiquary and humanist distinguished himself by publishing Pliny's *Letters* and by making a collection of 2000 ancient inscriptions, which he gave to Lorenzo de' Medici. Then, summoned by Louis XII to Paris, he built the Notre-Dame bridge over the Seine, and was the first to introduce the influence of the Italian Renaissance into France. His Venetian work gained him the name of 'the second builder of Venice'; he fortified Treviso; and at Rome he was one of the architects of the new St. Peter's.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> One should perhaps add to the above specimens of non-Florentine Quattrocento architecture certain remarkable palaces at Ferrara (Schifanoja and the Pal. de' Diamanti, so called from the shape of its *rustica*-blocks), which are evidently imitated from what I have called the Florentine 'Etruscan' style.





S.P.= Spanish dominions.  
 The Kingdom of Naples and Sicily was called the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies.



# PART III

## IL CINQUECENTO

### HISTORICAL OUTLINE

**A**LTHOUGH hitherto the history of Italy has lacked many of the motives and ideals which interest and inspire us as we observe the development of a real nation, it has been an instructive, if not an easy, task to trace—without losing ourselves in constitutional quagmires—the various, more or less unsuccessful, efforts of the Italian cities to attain republican freedom. But except in the case of Venice—if indeed we should make the exception—almost every spark of the sacred fire seems to have died out after the first third of the Cinquecento. Another era of barbarian invasions, worse perhaps than that of the Dark Ages, began in the fatal year of 1494 with the advent of Charles VIII, and by about 1530, after indescribable sufferings caused by the ferocious struggles of France and Spain, the greater part of Italy was enslaved to the mighty Spanish-Austrian Empire, and its subsequent history for some centuries is that of alien domination.

After therefore giving a sketch of the political events of the first thirty years or so of the Cinquecento I shall dismiss the rest of the century very briefly, and then pass on to consider from various less political points of view the internal history of Rome, Florence, and Venice—Naples and Milan having passed so far out of the realm of Italian history as to need scarcely any further mention beyond what will be found in the present chapter and in those on Literature and Art.

# ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

## 1500 TO ABOUT 1515

In a preceding chapter on **Rome** some of the chief events of the opening years of the Cinquecento have been already recounted, such as the death of Alexander VI and the dramatic fortunes and flight of his son, Cesare Borgia. Alexander's successor, the mild old Piccolomini, Pius III, survived election only 26 days, and in the same year (1503) the masterful and ambitious Giuliano Rovere assumed the tiara as Pope Julius II, whose pontificate of ten years is famous in the annals of politics, and still more in those of art. In the former we connect his name especially with the League of Cambrai against Venice and with his *Lega Santa* against the French; in the second his name reminds one of Raphael, of Michelangelo, and of Bramante.

Also the story of **Naples** has been carried for some distance into the Cinquecento. It has been related how Louis XII of France, after having overthrown and captured the Duke of Milan, Lodovico il Moro, whose duchy he claimed through Valentina Visconti, wished also to prosecute his claim to the Regno of Naples, as the heir of its former Angevin monarchs, and made a treaty (that of Granada) with Ferdinand the Catholic of Spain. Now King Ferdinand was cousin to the Aragonese king of Naples, Frederic, and was nominally on friendly terms with him, although he questioned his rights to the crown of Naples because of his father's (*i.e.* Ferrante's) illegitimacy. The signing of this secret treaty with the French king was therefore an infamous act of treachery. It was agreed that the Spaniards and the French should simultaneously but independently attack the Regno, and that it should be divided between Ferdinand and Louis. The unsuspecting Frederic was taken by surprise, overcome, dethroned, and allowed to withdraw to Spain. Then the two brigands began to quarrel over the spoil, and finally the French forces brought southwards by Francesco II (Gonzaga) of Mantua, accompanied by the exiled Piero de' Medici, were totally routed by Gonsalvo near Sujo on the Liris (Garigliano), in which river Piero was drowned

## HISTORICAL OUTLINE (1500-1600)

(1503). The supremacy of Spain having thus been established in South Italy, the Neapolitan kingdom was combined with that of Sicily and Sardinia, and the whole realm was henceforth known as that of the Two Sicilies. Naples was for the next two centuries governed by Spanish viceroys, of whom Gonsalvo was the first. The Regno will therefore no longer engage our attention, except incidentally.

How **Milan** came into the power of Louis XII has been fully related. The first year of the Cinquecento saw the final downfall of the Moro, after his brief re-establishment as Duke in 1499. It will be remembered that he was betrayed by his Swiss mercenaries, captured, and sent to France, where he died, after having spent some eight years in the dungeon of Loches (p. 304). After this, for a dozen years, Milan was ruled by French governors. The famous League of Cambrai,<sup>1</sup> in which Louis of France, Ferdinand the Catholic of Spain, the Emperor Maximilian, and Pope Julius II combined (1508) in order to crush Venice, put the French in possession of a great part of Lombardy; but the desertion of the Pope to the side of the Venetians and the formation of the *Lega Santa* against the French had the result (in spite of the French victory near Ravenna<sup>2</sup> in 1512) that they were expelled not only from their newly acquired territories in Lombardy, but from Milan (except the Castello), and even from Genoa. The allies thereupon set up as Milanese duke the eldest son of Lodovico il Moro and Beatrice d'Este, the foolish and frivolous youth Maximilian, who had been brought up at the court of the Emperor Maximilian and was, of course, a mere puppet in his hands. In 1513 Louis of France sent forces under Trivulzio to regain the Milanese duchy, but the Swiss mercenaries of Maximilian routed them at Novara and drove them back over the Alps—whereupon a French garrison which still held the strongly fortified and well-provisioned Castello in Milan sur-

<sup>1</sup> This is the city of Cambrai, not far from which was begun the final struggle in the Great War.

<sup>2</sup> The victory, as that of Lützen, where the Swedes conquered but Gustavus Adolphus fell, was changed into disaster by the death of the French commander, the brilliant and gallant young Gaston de Foix, nephew of Louis XII.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

rendered, and the young Duke seemed to have established himself firmly. However, two years later (1515) Francis I mounted the French throne and, actuated by bitter hostility towards the 'Holy Roman Emperor,' came with a great host against Milan, and at Marignano (Melegnano), ten miles from the city, cut the Swiss mercenaries to pieces. Duke Maximilian, after vainly attempting to hold the Castello, surrendered to Francis, abdicated, and was taken captive to France; and for the next six years (1515-1521) Milan was again under French rule—the French governor being that Constable Bourbon who later deserted to the side of the Emperor Charles V, and became the Spanish-Austrian governor of Milan, and fought for Charles at Pavia, and led the Germans and Spaniards against Rome, where he was killed.

Let us now turn to **Florence**. After the death of Savonarola in 1498 the Republic, as organized by him, continued to exist, but there were soon, as we have seen, clear signs of relapse (if such it be) towards what Machiavelli advocates as constitutional despotism. Thus, in 1502, the sage and affable old Pietro Soderini was elected Gonfaloniere *for life*. Moreover the warm sympathy shown by Florence with the French invader was clearly inconsistent with any ardent love of republican liberty, or any true patriotism. But the so-called Republic seems to have flourished, perhaps better than it deserved,<sup>1</sup> during the first dozen years of the Cinquecento, throughout which period Machiavelli held the office of Secretary to the Signoria and the Ten and, as we shall see later, aided very considerably in strengthening the military position of Florence by his zeal in founding a regular city militia. These years are also, as we shall see, of great interest on account of Florentine art, in which connexion may be once more mentioned the *David* of Michelangelo—that splendid symbol of the Republic defying its foes.

But the Florentine Republic was doomed to fall. In 1512, after the death of Gaston de Foix at the battle of Ravenna, the French were, as we have seen, expelled from Milan and

<sup>1</sup> In 1509 Florence finally subjugated Pisa.



## HISTORICAL OUTLINE (1500-1600)

the rest of Northern Italy, and Florence, which had always helped them with its money, was exposed to the revengeful fury of the *Lega Santa*. The Spanish captain-general, Cardona, bribed by Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici (whose brother, the exiled Piero, had been drowned in the Liris nine years previously), attacked Prato and slaughtered many of its inhabitants. Thereupon the panic-stricken Florentines agreed to recall the Medici. Cardinal Giovanni and his brother Giuliano, Duke of Nemours, were therefore installed as the supreme rulers of Florence. In the next year, however, Pope Julius II died, and Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici succeeded him as Leo X. Soon afterwards Giuliano resigned and died, and was succeeded by Piero's son, Lorenzo, whom Leo X had made Duke of Urbino, having shamefully dispossessed the legitimate Duke, Francesco Maria.

**Venice** lastly claims our attention. Political facts of very great importance from her point of view during these first 15 years or so of the century were, of course, the League of Cambrai and the Holy League (*Lega Santa*), the results of which have been briefly described already. But she had to cope not only with the furious jealousy of four great Christian states allied together for the purpose of 'extinguishing as a dangerous conflagration her greed for dominion'; she had in the Turks a foe not less formidable, not less embittered—a foe against whom she was yet for many years to struggle desperately; and her ruin, though long delayed by heroism, was inevitable, for the sea trade of Europe was passing away from her now that America and the Cape route had been discovered.

It may be remembered that when Lodovico Sforza of Milan was seriously threatened by the French king, Louis XII, he appealed to Venice for aid, but found that the Republic was in secret understanding with the French. Lodovico accordingly, it seems, incited the Turks, and the result was a very serious naval defeat (near Sapienza) inflicted on the Venetian and French squadron. So great was the disaster that the Venetian admiral, Antonio Grimani, was sent to Venice in irons, and barely escaped execution. (He was, however, banished

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

to Dalmatia, and lived to ascend the throne of the Doges in 1521.) So great, too, was the panic that in the Friuli Venetian troops refused to face the Turks, and, although the Republic rejected humiliating terms offered by the Sultan, its courage was sorely tried by the loss of Lepanto, Navarino, and many other possessions. Nevertheless land-hunger proved insatiable, and during the long and energetic rule of Doge Leonardo Loredan (1501-1521) Venice was brought (as told in Chapter V of Part II) by her annexation of various cities of the 'Papal State' on the fall of the Borgias into violent conflict with Pope Julius and his powerful allies, and lost temporarily a great part of her Lombard territory—indeed almost all except Padua. Then, when the Pope abandoned his allies, and with the Venetians and Spaniards formed his Holy League, and succeeded in chasing the French from Italy, Venice found herself for a time in a fairly satisfactory position. But, as usual, she began to play false. Being treated somewhat scurvily by her papal and Imperial allies (the Pope making preposterous claims to Parma and Piacenza and Maximilian refusing to restore to her the cities of Verona and Vicenza), she made a secret treaty with the French king and induced him to attack Milan once more—which, as we have seen, he did at first (1513) unsuccessfully and then (1515) successfully, recapturing the city, forcing the Sforza dukelet to abdicate, and establishing French rule so firmly that for six years the Spaniards and Imperialists had to abandon this region. In the wars between these northern invaders for the possession of Northern Italy—wars which were practically ended by the famous battle of Pavia in 1525—Venice stood aside. She had to think of her sea-empire, and henceforth took little active part in the internal politics of Italy.

### 1515 TO ABOUT 1530

I have now to glance at the chief political occurrences of the period 1515-1530, and to show, as clearly as possible, the connexion with them of Rome, Florence, and Venice—with incidental allusions to Milan and Naples, which have ceased to exercise any independent influence as Italian cities.

## HISTORICAL OUTLINE (1500-1600)

On the death of Julius II, in 1513, Spanish influence was temporarily supreme in Italy, the French having been expelled after the battle of Ravenna, with the results that the Papacy had regained the 'States of the Church' and Venice nearly all her mainland territory, Genoa had won the form of republican freedom, and Milan was governed by a degenerate Sforza, who was a mere puppet in the hands of the Austrian 'Holy Roman Emperor.'

At **Rome** the new Pope, Leo X, was that Giovanni de' Medici who, together with his brother Giuliano, Duke of Nemours, had been lately established as ruler of Florence. As these Medici had been restored by Spanish help it was natural that, while fortune favoured the Spaniards and Imperialists, the Pope should throw in his lot with them; and, in spite of his bodily and mental obesity, he had wits enough to extract advantages from both sides—not for the benefit of the Church, but for his relations.<sup>1</sup>

Early in Leo's pontificate (1516) took place the death of Ferdinand the Catholic. He left no male heir. His daughter (known as the 'mad Joanna') married the Crown Prince of Austria, who died, leaving his son Charles as heir to the Spanish and the Imperial thrones. In 1519, on the death of Maximilian, the young and ambitious Charles, hitherto King Charles I of Spain, assumed the title of Emperor Charles V (*Charles Quint*).

During the last year of Leo's life he co-operated vigorously with the new and formidable Spanish-Austrian Power, sending an army, led by Prospero Colonna, to aid in chasing the French once more out of Romagna and Lombardy; and he claimed and obtained his reward—the cities of Parma and Piacenza. His pontificate is known to all as the period during which at Rome the splendid, though extravagant, classicism of Cinquecento art reached its fullest development, and the period during which in Germany the religious movement began which ended in the great rupture between Northern Christendom and the Roman Church (Leo excommunicated Luther in 1520).

<sup>1</sup> For the infamous deposition of the Duke of Urbino and the bestowal of the dukedom on the young Lorenzo de' Medici see p. 482.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

Another most important event, and one that had a vast effect on Christendom, was the renewed advance of the Turks, who conquered Syria and Egypt and soon spread over the whole coast of North Africa and began to dominate the Mediterranean.

When Leo X died in 1521 it was not surprising that the former tutor of Charles V, Adrian of Utrecht, was chosen, although Charles was quite ready to favour the claims of the ambitious Cardinal Giulio de' Medici.

Adrian, the son of a boat-maker of Utrecht, after spending his youth in dissipation, had been chosen by Maximilian as the tutor of his grandson. He then became intensely orthodox, and even ascetic, and was made Bishop of Tortosa in Spain. For some time after election to the Papacy he deferred coming to Rome. He could speak no Italian, and pronounced Latin with a 'barbaric accent.' He disliked and despised art and *le belle lettere*. The contrast between him and Leo was something indescribable. The Vatican became like a Trappist monastery. Artists such as Giulio Romano and Sebastian del Piombo were, says Vasari, almost starved to death. Adrian's intentions were most admirable, but he excited disfavour and opposition by all he did, his attitude towards the German schism was weak, his own attempts at reform were unsuccessful, and his pontificate was saddened by the massacres that accompanied the capture of Rhodes and the expulsion of the Knights of St. John by the triumphant Suleiman.

Adrian VI reigned not two years. He was followed (1523) by Giulio de' Medici, who adopted the name Clement VII. This Giulio, who had been installed as ruler of Florence on the death of Lorenzo II in 1519, was the illegitimate son of that Giuliano de' Medici who was killed (1478) by the Pazzi conspirators. His pontificate (1523-1534) covers events which were the moving causes of the utter collapse of Italian independence. The chief of these events, such as the battle of Pavia, the sack of Rome, and the capture of Florence—all triumphs for the Spanish-Austrian Empire—will be described in later chapters.

With the pontificate of Clement VII not only the *Istoria*



## HISTORICAL OUTLINE (1500-1600)

*d'Italia* of Clement's contemporary, Guicciardini, but also the great modern work on the City of Rome by Gregorovius comes to an end; nor without reason, seeing that the last attempt to rescue Italy from alien domination by the futile League of Independence having failed, and Clement having sealed the bond of slavery by crowning Charles at Bologna (1530) as *Imperator Romanorum* (the last time such absurdity took place in Italy), there is but little edifying to relate about the political history of Rome—or indeed of any other city of Italy except Venice—for the rest of the century. Italy had become a province of the Spanish-Austrian Empire, as ten centuries earlier it became a province of the Byzantine Empire. All the northern and central states except Venice and such insignificant republics as Lucca and Siena were ruled by puppets of the Emperor, who was king of the Two Sicilies—including Malta, vouchsafed by Charles as a fief to the Knights of St. John, who had been driven from Rhodes by the Turks.

We have now to note the connexion of **Florence** with the general history of Italy during this period. Only a few words will be necessary, seeing that Florence forms the subject of a subsequent chapter. Florentine history was brought down in a former paragraph to the accession, as more or less constitutional despot, of Lorenzo de' Medici, so-called Duke of Urbino, the weak-witted son of the weak-witted 'Piero the Unfortunate,' as he is sometimes euphemistically called. Lorenzo kept magnificent court at Florence. He was married to a French lady of royal blood. His uncle, Leo X, had brought about the marriage, craftily intriguing with the French court perhaps with the hope of seeing the Medici kings of Italy, in spite of Spaniards and Imperialists. But Lorenzo died in 1519, and his relative, Cardinal Giulio, who took his place for some four years, was elected Pope (Clement VII) in 1523. With Lorenzo II was extinguished all hope of legitimate heirs in that elder Medicean family which was descended from old Cosimo. Two illegitimate children alone remained. For some three years Florence was governed by the foolish Cardinal Passerini, whom Pope Clement had made tutor to these

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

children with the intention of educating them as future rulers—for he had no idea of allowing the lordship of Florence to fall into the hands of the younger, legitimate, Medicean family. However, in 1527, while the Imperialists were sacking Rome, the Florentines rose and expelled the two young bastards—one of whom was probably a son of the Pope himself by a mulatto woman. This third expulsion of the Medici was followed by a brief revival of the Republic—a transient afterglow before the night of enslavement; for one may apply this word in its full sense to the rule of the later Medici. The reconciliation of Clement VII with Charles V after the sack of Rome resulted in the famous siege and capture of Florence (1529–1530). Thereupon Charles imposed on the city, as its regent, the half-mulatto bastard above mentioned, namely Alessandro the Moor, who married a daughter of the Emperor and received the title of Duke of Florence—the democratic form of government being entirely abolished, and with it all that truly bears the name of liberty.

Lastly, the annals of **Venice** during this period (1515–1530) record but little that influenced the general political state of Italy. It has been already seen how, after weathering the tempest raised by the League of Cambrai, the Republic endeavoured to give a wide berth to the storm-centres of the mainland. The Government was indeed obliged now and then to afford some practical proof of its professed sincerity, and having meanly made a secret agreement with Francis I, it did send troops to aid his descent on Milan in 1515, and these Venetian troops happened to arrive just at the right moment, and probably decided the result of the French victory at Marignano. Also on several occasions Venice lent her money to one side—or the other. Thus, not long after aiding Francis to regain Milan she is to be detected supplying Charles V with great sums in the struggle which ended in the defeat and capture of Francis at Pavia. On the whole we may regard Venice during this period as enjoying many of the advantages of isolation and duplicity.

In the general settlement of affairs which confirmed the

## HISTORICAL OUTLINE (1500-1600)

enslavement of Italy—of which some of the official acts were a second treaty signed at Cambrai, and another signed at Barcelona, and (in the same year, viz. 1530) the Congress at Bologna and the coronation of the Spanish-Austrian potentate as a Roman Caesar—the interests of Venice were ignored. She had to surrender Ravenna and other places to the Pope, and her Apulian ports to the Spaniards, and had to renounce her mainland conquests west of the river Adda, which remained the frontier until her final fall.

### ABOUT 1530 TO 1600

It remains for me to sketch very briefly the political history of Rome, Florence, and Venice during the last 70 years of the Cinquecento, as far as they had any political influence or existence.

The annals of **Rome**—that is of the papal court—show for many years after the establishment of the new barbarian supremacy what, at first sight, might appear a trend in the right direction—if the true function of the Vicar of Christ is mainly of a religious nature. But whether much progress was made in any right direction, religious or other, seems somewhat questionable. The following dry facts will perhaps be interpreted differently by different readers. Of the dozen Pontiffs who fill up our period of 70 years, the first four were naturally much exercised by the alarming increase in breadth and depth of that rupture—that Great Schism—that had been begun in 1517 by the audacious monk of Wittenberg. Counter-Reformation had been suggested as a possible method of staying the rent. But this idea, which brought about the famous Council of Trent, had as its rather barren result not reformation but denunciation. The Council made no changes whatever in the doctrines, and none but the most perfunctory in the practices, of the Roman Church, merely ruling out as unorthodox and damnable many doctrines and practices of the Protestants. The Inquisition, terrible enough hitherto, was by Paul III lent new and almost unlimited powers, and the central body—the Sacred Office—from which all its deadly

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

tentacles were vitalized, found its Scylla-like lair in Rome, under the shadow of the new St. Peter's.<sup>1</sup> In connexion with the Sacred Office the order of Jesuits, founded eight years before (*i.e.* in 1534) by the Spaniard Ignatius Loyola, proved very useful. About this time was instituted also the *Index of Prohibited Books*. The sum total of these results of Counter-Reformation is sometimes described, not without approval, as 'the Catholic Revival.'

It was during the pontificate of the non-Florentine Medicean Pius IV, namely in 1563, that the Council, which had held its sessions very intermittently during 18 years, at Trento and for a time at Bologna, came to its conclusion. Some seven years earlier (1556) had taken place a political event of very great import, namely the dramatic abdication of the Emperor Charles V, who left the Imperial throne to his brother Ferdinand and the throne of Spain to his son, Philip II, notorious for his *autos-de-fé*, for his marriage with our Queen Mary, for the 'Spanish Armada' (1588), and for the incitement of plots against 'good Queen Bess'—in all which matters he had the zealous co-operation of Popes Pius V, Gregory XIII, and Sixtus V.

Gregory XIII is the Pope who (in 1583) made himself notable by instituting the 'Gregorian Calendar.' He also erected to himself a monument perhaps scarcely less perennial in the huge pile of the Collegio Romano—a building which was soon consigned to the uses of the Jesuits, but now serves for housing the magnificent Biblioteca Vittorio Emanuele and valuable museums.

Sixtus V was the eighth of our twelve Popes. He had been a hard-working friar in the Marche, and as he was a simple man, of modest origin and strong character, it is not surprising that he set to work to purge, as far as possible, the Augean mews of Rome, both lay and clerical. What seems less intelligible in a man of his antecedents is that he did much to beautify Rome, re-erecting ancient statues and several of the fallen obelisks, and giving the Acqua Felice its well-known

<sup>1</sup> The building is now, as my friend Dr. Gordon Gray informs me, used for the offices of the Cancelleria, the Indice, etc.



## HISTORICAL OUTLINE (1500-1600)

fountain, which, adorned by a clumsy imitation of Michelangelo's *Moses*, stands to-day at a corner of the present Via Venti Settembre.

Finally, Clement VIII (1592-1605), of the Aldobrandini family, should be mentioned, not only because of Tasso, who died at Rome during his pontificate, but also in connexion with politics, as a sincere advocate of peace. For instance, he absolved Henry IV of France from excommunication and helped to bring about the Peace of Vervins between France and Spain; moreover, three years later (1601) he induced the aggressive Carlo Emanuele of Savoy<sup>1</sup> to make the Treaty of Lyon with Henry IV. During this Pope's reign the heirs of the house of Este became extinct and the duchy of Ferrara lapsed to the Church.

The story of **Florence** during the last 70 years of the Cinquecento has now to be indicated briefly. We have seen how in 1530 Alessandro the Moor became the first Duke. His vicious and contemptible existence<sup>2</sup> was cut short in 1537 by his boon-companion, Lorenzino, a scion of the younger Medicean family, who after murdering him fled to Venice, where ten years later he himself was murdered by Cosimo's agents.

This Cosimo, also a scion of the younger family (son of Giovanni delle Bande Nere), after Alessandro's death became Duke, and later Grand Duke of Tuscany. Henceforth the government of the state (which included Pisa, Siena, Arezzo, and other cities) was practically monarchical. The crimes and fortunes of Cosimo I, as well as those of his two sons and successors, Francesco I and Ferdinand I, and the

<sup>1</sup> The Dukes of Savoy had lost all their territories during the long wars in North Italy between the French and Spanish. A part had been restored at the Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis (1559) to Emanuele Filiberto, who, adopting the motto *Spoliatis arma supersunt*, had served brilliantly under Philip II of Spain. He was father to this Carlo Emanuele, who was a very strong and ambitious character and made desperate efforts to capture Geneva, formerly Savoyan; but all his efforts failed—partly on account of aid sent by England to the Protestant cantons.

<sup>2</sup> Among his crimes was probably the murder of the other bastard above mentioned, viz. Cardinal Ippolito, natural son of the late Giuliano de' Medici, Duke of Nemours. See Fig. 59 (a).

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

romantic story of the fair Venetian, Bianca Cappello, will be related in the chapter on Florence.

As regards **Venice**, the struggles with the Turks that occupied her so fully during these last 70 years of the century had but little direct influence on the general political history of the period, and therefore need not here delay us long. Of course they are of the very greatest importance, and will be fully related in the proper place, for not only did the heroic resistance of the Venetians perhaps save Christendom, but in order to understand Venice aright at this era we must not study her merely at home. We must remember that, although her Italian mainland policy had ended in something like ignominy, she was a very different Venice in the East. She was still great—not by reason only of the art treasures of the City of the Lagunes, but also by reason of the glories of the Greater Venice of her overseas empire. The story of the gradual but steady decline of this empire during the Cinquecento—a decline only temporarily delayed by the great victory of Lepanto in 1571—will be told in a subsequent chapter.



50. POPE JULIUS II



51. POPE LEO X AND CARDINALS



## CHAPTER I

### ROME AND THE PAPACY (1500-1600)

THE internal history of the Eternal City now becomes, as also the external, practically identical with the story of the Papacy, and, especially after the accession of Julius II, who was the first real Pope-king,<sup>1</sup> Rome as a political entity may be regarded as no longer existent. The revolting state of things that prevailed in papal Rome during the first few years of the century has been sufficiently intimated in a former chapter, where the death of Alexander VI and the flight of Caesar Borgia are described. In the present chapter I shall limit myself to certain striking episodes and personalities, and to matters artistic, ignoring almost entirely external political complications, and paying but little attention to chronological continuity.

The part of the Cinquecento that is the most interesting and important historically and artistically is the first third, which comprises the pontificates of Julius II, Leo X, and Clement VII. These three Popes, their personal characters, their local surroundings, and their connexions with great artists, will form the subjects of the following sketches, necessarily very scanty in such details as make monographs attractive. I shall also introduce descriptions of the sack of Rome in 1527 and the coronation of Charles by Pope Clement at Bologna in 1530.

#### (I) JULIUS II

Giuliano della Rovere, who succeeded the mild old Piccolomini Pontiff, Pius III, was a nephew of Sixtus IV. The chief

<sup>1</sup> Sixtus IV and Alexander VI certainly compete with Julius for this title, but a series of dramatic events carried Julius in his last years to a meridian altitude in regard to actual sovereignty that had never been attained by any

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

progenitor of the Rovere family, which attained such eminence in the Church, was, it will be remembered, a boatman of Savona. Giuliano had become the bishop of eight different cities—including Verdun, Lausanne, Avignon, and Ostia. By his uncle he had been created Cardinal of S. Pietro in Vincoli—the very ancient Roman church in which his huge cenotaph—the ‘tragedy’ of Michelangelo’s life—was later erected.

The feeling in Rome against the late Alexander VI and his infamous son was so strong that the bitter hostility of the Della Rovere family towards the Borgia, together with a lavish expenditure of money and of promises, by which the votes of the Spanish ecclesiastics were secured, made the election of Giuliano a certainty. The Conclave of the thirty-five cardinals had hardly assembled and the door had hardly been shut <sup>1</sup> when the result was announced. The new Pope adopted the name Giulio (Julius)—not, says Guicciardini, because of his baptismal name, but ‘to signify the greatness of his conceptions and ambitions.’

Although an inveterate foe of the Borgia clan, Cardinal Giuliano had thought it politic to win the favour of Caesar, who, though his position was now very precarious, had still many powerful adherents and still possessed the strongholds of Forlì, Imola, and other fortified cities; so when old Pius III died—after a pontificate of only 26 days—and the Orsini fiercely demanded the Borgia’s head, he had endeavoured to pacify them, and had allowed the Valentino to reside and hold his own court in the Vatican—nay, he had even offered to recognize him as the Gonfaloniere of the Church and as the Governor of Romagna, of which region this bloodstained and ambitious bastard of Pope Alexander had long ago become

of his predecessors. The mixed temporal and spiritual overlordship of such Popes as Hildebrand and Innocent III was of a different nature.

<sup>1</sup> The rules concerning the confinement of the cardinals in Conclave had been at times very severe. Thus, according to the decree of Gregory X, promulgated at Lyon in 1274, the doors and windows of the hall had to be walled up, only a small aperture being left for the introduction of the exceedingly scanty fare allowed to the electors, who were sometimes thus confined for weeks when they could not arrive at a decision.

## ROME (1500-1600)

duke and hoped to become king. But after finding himself firmly seated on the papal throne Julius deemed it unnecessary to remember his promises ; and in about three months' time Caesar was a fugitive, as is fully related elsewhere.

The political intrigues of Julius in connexion with the League of Cambrai (1508), and the varied fortunes of the long struggle between the French and the Spaniards, need not here be retold. We need only note that the course of events which culminated in the battle of Ravenna (1512) and the restoration of the Medici in Florence and of the Sforza in Milan brought Julius, so to speak, to the crest of the wave, and that during the last ten months of his pontificate he found himself invested with an authority and an influence more regal—a pontifical principality more real—than that attained by any former Pope.

It will be remembered that the first news from Ravenna announced the victory of the French. Great consternation reigned in the Vatican and throughout Rome. Soon, however, arrived the tidings that the French commander, the young Gaston de Foix, had fallen, and ere long it was learnt that the French were in full retreat, being chased out of the whole of Northern Italy ; and within three months, with the help of Spaniards, Venetians, and 20,000 Swiss mercenaries, Julius had recovered all the cities that he had lost, among which of especial importance were Bologna and Ferrara.

In this connexion we may note that before the battle of Ravenna, when the French under Gaston de Foix came sweeping down eastwards over Lombardy and Emilia, Julius had opposed them in person—taking an actual part in the fighting—and had recaptured various towns, among which was Mirandola, the home of the famous Pico. At the capture of this town he is said to have been one of the first to enter the breach, dressed in full armour.<sup>1</sup> But in spite of his gallant efforts the French made themselves masters of Bologna, and it was then (1511) that Michelangelo's bronze statue of Julius II, which had been placed over the portal of the cathedral (S. Petronio), was thrown down and broken to pieces. The metal of this statue was

<sup>1</sup> ' Drawn up to the breach in a wooden box,' says Villari.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

used by Alfonso, Duke of Ferrara, the obstinate adversary of Julius, for founding a cannon—an act which so embittered the Pope that when, a year or so later, Alfonso came to Rome to beg for absolution, he was obliged to escape in disguise in order to save his life; and it is interesting to note that after his safe arrival at Ferrara he ventured to dispatch an envoy to implore papal forgiveness—and that this envoy was Ariosto—and that Ariosto too had to flee for his life, as the irascible Julius threatened to drown him in the Tiber ‘like a dog’—an episode which the poet treats as a joke in one of his Satires.

As a secular prince, says Guicciardini, Pope Julius II would have deserved high reputation. He certainly deserved nothing of the kind as a Vicar of Christ; but he possessed warlike prowess and great strength of will, and harboured great designs; and as far as these great designs were concerned he for the most part succeeded, although it must be allowed that what seemed to be the grandest of his projects—that of expelling the barbarian—was mainly actuated by personal ambitions, and that he only expelled the one barbarian invader by helping the other to enslave Italy.

It is to his patronage of art—and especially to his connexion with the three supreme artists, Michelangelo, Raphael, and Bramante—that Julius owes his real distinction. Under him and Leo X, during about 20 years, Rome once more became the artistic metropolis of the world, as it had been in the Augustan age. Other Italian cities at this era produced not a few supremely gifted painters and sculptors and architects, many of whom were attracted to Rome by the splendid patronage of the papal court, and here they seem to have been inspired by a grandeur of style which was doubtless mainly derived from the ancient greatness of the Eternal City.

Any full discussion from a religious or moral standpoint of the state of things that prevailed at the courts of Julius and Leo would lead us too far afield; but I find it impossible to pass by the subject without making a few remarks, and suggesting a few questions.

It would of course be grossly unjust, in spite of the scan-



## ROME (1500-1600)

dalous immorality that was, so to speak, covered over with Raphaellesque tapestries, to class Julius and Leo with such a Pontiff as Alexander VI; but, without being monstrous criminals, both these Popes seem to have been about as far removed as possible from the conception that an unprejudiced study of the New Testament induces a reasonable person to form of such a Head of the Church as would have been approved of by its Founder. Now, to what was this due? The external characteristics of art were at this era decidedly, and not seldom extravagantly, pagan; but this was caused by influences that were not in themselves anti-Christian or immoral; for, whether or not its external characteristics happen to be pagan, art is not essentially anti-Christian—not even incompatible with such Christianity as that of Savonarola and the *Piagnoni*. No. The fault lay elsewhere. In its ideals and its practice the Roman court under these splendid pontifical patrons of art, we venture to affirm, was itself a worse than pagan negation of all that is essential in the teaching of Christ; and in order to support this assertion, instead of adducing the testimony of such eyewitnesses as Luther and Erasmus,<sup>1</sup> perhaps it will be more satisfactory to cite Machiavelli and Guicciardini—the former of these two great writers familiar with the papal court under the Borgia and under Julius II, the latter highly favoured by the two Medici Popes, and for some time governor of various cities in the Papal States. In his *Discorsi* Machiavelli says that how greatly the Christian religion as instituted by its Founder had been altered and corrupted might be seen from the fact that those who lived nearest Rome were just those who believed least; and he asserts that ‘with the Church and the priests we Italians were first compelled to become irreligious and bad.’ Moreover, he laments that ‘the Church alone has made impossible a United Italy.’ Guicciardini, in

<sup>1</sup> After visiting Rome (in 1510) Luther exclaimed, ‘If there is a Hell, Rome must be built above it.’ Erasmus visited it twice in the pontificate of Julius, and though (unlike the Philistine Luther) charmed with the antiquities, the art, and the elegant literary life of the city, poured out the vials of his bitterest satire on the pomp and greed of the papal court, the scandals of Indulgences, the ridiculous superstitions, and the paganization of Christianity.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

his comments on the *Discorsi* of his friend, although he doubts whether a fusion of Italy into a single republic would have proved a success, allows that it was the Church alone that was the obstacle to any such unification ; and he adds : ‘ Of the Court of Rome one cannot say so much evil that it would not deserve more, seeing that it is an infamy—an incarnation of all that is shameful and opprobrious in the world.’

Here several questions suggest themselves—besides the ever-recurring, insoluble problem of the connexions of art and morality. If we allow that, in spite of its extravagance and its evident signs of decay, the art of the High Renaissance produced much that was of real value for human progress, is it not reasonable to assert that these Pontiffs, although entirely false to their spiritual mission, nevertheless fulfilled a most important function ? And when we remember the implacable intolerance and the vandalism of many medieval Popes—such as Gregory the Great—in regard to classic literature, mythology, philosophy, and art, and in regard to intellectual liberty and progress, is not a most delightful contrast offered by this ‘ pagan ’ revival of art-enthusiasm, and by those triumphs of reason over superstition which were not seldom favoured by Julius II and Leo X ? And is not this contrast—and our gratitude—intensified when we remember that soon after this short period of scarce 20 years, during which the Papacy allied itself with what most of us regard as ‘ progress,’ the consternation caused by the Reformation produced such woeful phenomena as the rise of the Jesuits and the terrors of the Inquisition ?

The connexion of Julius II with some of the great artists of the Cinquecento will be noted more at length in a subsequent chapter. Here a few facts will suffice. As regards architecture, it will be remembered that Bramante came to Rome from Milan about 1499, and that it was probably in the second year of the next century that he built what is usually regarded as the first specimen of his celebrated later style—the first fully developed direct revival of classic architecture—namely, the *Tempietto* of S. Pietro in Montorio.<sup>1</sup> With Bramante as

<sup>1</sup> See Part II, Chapter VII.

## ROME (1500-1600)

his architect, Julius made the great Via Giulia (from the Ponte Sisto to the Vatican), which soon, with its fine palaces, became the most fashionable street in Rome. Also he laid out the Lungara, on the other side of the Tiber, intending to flank it with palaces; and here his financial adviser, the rich merchant Agostino Chigi, erected from the designs of the Siena architect Peruzzi that Villa Chigi which was shortly afterwards adorned with the wondrous frescos of Raphael and is known to all who know Rome under the name 'Villa Farnesina.'

But of all architectural facts connected with Julius II the foundation of the new St. Peter's is the best known. The destruction of the old basilica—first determined perhaps by Nicholas V, to whom Bernardo Rossellini (p. 606) furnished the earliest designs for a new edifice—was an event that, in spite of all the magnificence of the later St. Peter's, cannot but be deeply deplored, and one's regret is certainly not decreased by the thought that the decision of Julius to build a new cathedral (the foundation-stone of which was laid on April 18, 1509) was actuated by the desire to have a building large enough to exhibit satisfactorily his enormous tomb, nor by the thought that the vast sums requisite for beginning this mightiest of all earthly fanes were mainly derived from the scandalous sale of Indulgences, which raised the indignation of a great part of Christendom and was one of the most potent causes of the success of the Great Schism. Giuliano da Sangallo, who had worked in Rome under Alexander VI, seems to have induced Julius to take up the primary design abandoned by Nicholas V; but it was to Bramante that was entrusted the construction of the new St. Peter's, the subsequent fortunes of which will be related in the chapter on Cinquecento art. Besides Giuliano da Sangallo, Peruzzi, and Bramante, we find at Rome at this time the very fine architect and sculptor Andrea di Monte Sansovino.<sup>1</sup>

As regards painting, in the early years of this pontificate there were still to be seen in Rome several celebrated Tuscan

<sup>1</sup> To be distinguished from his famous disciple, Jacopo di Sansovino, who adopted his place-name.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

and Umbrian artists (Perugino, Signorelli, and others) who had been employed by Sixtus IV to paint frescos on the walls of his great Cappella. In 1507 Sodoma was invited to Rome by the rich banker Chigi, and a year later Raphael was (on the suggestion of his fellow-townsmen, Bramante of Urbino) summoned by Julius from Florence, where he was studying the cartoons of Leonardo and Michelangelo and the Carmine frescos of Masaccio and painting some of his adorable early Madonnas. He was at once entrusted with the decoration of the Vatican *Stanze*,<sup>1</sup> and spent a great part of the rest of his life (1508–20) on this, perhaps his greatest, work. While Raphael was thus engaged, Michelangelo was producing his wondrous frescos on the ceiling and vaulted sides of the Sistine Chapel—those scenes depicting the Creation, the Fall, the Deluge, etc., and those majestic Prophets and Sibyls which are perhaps the grandest of all pictorial works of human genius.<sup>2</sup>

The enthusiasm for classical art was naturally greatly intensified by the important discoveries of ancient works of sculpture that were made during the pontificate of Julius II. The *Apollo*, which had been found (at Grottaferrata?) some years previously, and which was by Julius transported from his former palace near SS. Apostoli to the garden-house of the Belvedere, formed the germ from which were developed the mighty sculpture galleries of the Vatican. In 1506 the *Laocoön* was discovered in a vineyard near the Baths of Titus,<sup>3</sup> where

<sup>1</sup> They were already adorned with frescos by Piero della Francesca, Signorelli, and Perugino. These were erased, except those by Perugino, saved by the request of his disciple. These *Stanze* (Rooms) were built by Nicholas V and were used by Julius II because he so hated Alexander VI that he would not inhabit the splendid Borgia Apartments.

<sup>2</sup> See Part III, Chapter V. He was called to Rome by Julius in 1505, left it in disgust in 1506, was reconciled with Julius at Bologna, and made the bronze statue of him (p. 551) in 1508, returned then to Rome, and again worked at the 'tragedy of his life' and at the Sistine Chapel ceiling frescos till the death of the Pope. It was not till a much later return to Rome that he produced the *Last Judgment* (1534–41).

<sup>3</sup> The son of the architect Giuliano da Sangallo gives a lively description of how his father was sent thither in hot haste by Julius, how Michelangelo accompanied him, and how they at once recognized the group as that described by Pliny.



## ROME (1500-1600)

some years later more than 20 most valuable sculptures were unearthed. Among the ancient masterpieces that came to light during the pontificate of Julius may be mentioned the beautiful reclining female figure that used to be called *Cleopatra* (on account of her serpent-bracelet), but is now generally known as *Ariadne*, and the *Torso* (of Hercules ?) which Michelangelo used to call his 'master'—so much was he indebted to its teachings.

### (2) LEO X

Soon after Piero de' Medici had been obliged to flee from Florence (1494) on the approach of the French king, Charles VIII, his brother, Cardinal Giovanni, is said to have escaped thence in the disguise of a monk and to have joined him at Venice. Later, after wanderings through France and Germany, he took up his residence at Rome, and in 1512 was in Lombardy with the papal forces that attempted to resist the eastward advance of the French under Gaston de Foix. At the battle of Ravenna, where the French won, but lost their gallant young leader, Giovanni was taken prisoner by them. However, while they retreated towards Milan he managed to escape during the passage of the Po ; and shortly afterwards, aided by the Spanish troops of Cardona, who had perpetrated fearful atrocities on the capture of Prato and had overawed the Florentines, the two Medici brothers, Giuliano and Giovanni—Piero having been drowned in the Liris some eight years before—were reinstated in Florence in the place of the republican magistracy. Here Cardinal Giovanni shared power for a few months with his brother Giuliano and his cousin Giulio (afterwards Pope Clement VII), but in March 1513, at the age of 36, he was chosen to succeed Julius II on the papal throne, his only serious rival being the rich Raffaele Riario, who, as a boy-cardinal, it may be remembered, was reading Mass in the Florentine cathedral when the elder Giuliano de' Medici was assassinated by the Pazzi conspirators (1478), and who is said to have borne on his face a look of terror ever afterwards.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> He lived till 1521, after nearly losing his life through a charge of conspiracy brought against him, rather disgracefully, by his great personal enemy, Leo X.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

Leo had grown up at the court of his father, Lorenzo il Magnifico, and was deeply imbued with the love of cultured elegance. According to Lorenzo's verdict he was the wise one of his three sons, Giuliano being the good one, and Piero the fool of the family. From a less prejudiced point of view he may be described as clever but unoriginal, vain, indolent, tolerant almost to indifference, extravagant, liberal, sensuous. Villari well sums up his merits as art-patron in the words *un gran dilettante*. The character of the man is pictured with wondrous skill and evident exactitude in his portrait by Raphael, who has immortalized his comfortable obesity, his podgy white hands, of which he was so proud, and the magnifying-glass which he used on account of his short sight.

The procession from St. Peter's and the ceremony of installation at the Lateran were the most magnificent ever seen. Leo was mounted on the white charger which exactly one year previously he had ridden at the battle of Ravenna. The mob of mobile Quirites, foreseeing *panem et circenses*, or their equivalents, under the rule of this self-indulgent Medicean prince, made the streets of Rome resound to the exultant cry of *Palle! Palle!*

At the time of Leo's elevation to the Papacy the Imperialists were supreme in Northern Italy—the French having been driven across the Alps. But the death of King Louis XII and the accession of Francis I in 1515, followed in the next year by the death of Ferdinand the Catholic and the accession to power, first as King of Spain and then as Emperor, of Charles, were events that, as has been related in the Historical Outline, produced startling results. At first Leo was dumbfounded by the brilliant success of the French at Marignano and by the capture of Milan; but when fortune gradually turned in the favour of the Spaniards and Germans he found himself, as Julius had done, on the crest of the wave, and, as Julius had added Bologna, so did he endeavour to add permanently to the Papal States the cities of Ferrara, Parma, and Piacenza. He was still comparatively young (45) when he died—so suddenly that some writers (as Ranke) have suspected poison

## ROME (1500-1600)

—just as he seemed to be grasping firmly the sceptre of temporal power.

I do not purpose to consider in detail the relations of the Papacy with the Reformation, but may here note in passing that three of Leo's important acts during the last year of his life were the launching of the anathema against Luther (January 1521, just before the Diet of Worms), the alliance with Charles V—signed at Rome on the same day (May 8, 1521) as that on which Charles at Worms signed the Edict of the Diet—and the excommunication of the French king, Francis I.

The importance of Leo's pontificate of nine years in regard to art is unquestionably very great, although perhaps it is rather Julius II who should give his name to the Golden Age of the Roman Renaissance. Various facts connected with his magnificent patronage will occupy us in the chapter on art.<sup>1</sup> Here a slight sketch of the vast picture must suffice, showing the connexions with the papal court of certain eminent artists, almost all of whom, be it noted, had been already employed before by Julius. Thus, during five years before the death of this Pontiff Raphael had been working constantly at his *Stanze* frescos. He had introduced the portrait of Julius II in the *Mass of Bolsena*, and now the accession of Leo X induced him (perhaps compelled him) to introduce that Pope's portrait in the frescos which glorify the deeds of various ancient pontiffs of the same name.<sup>2</sup> During these years he was producing also another work of indescribable beauty and nobility—the cartoons for the tapestries (*Arazzi*) which Leo had ordered for the further decoration of the Sistine Chapel; and about the same time he produced the designs of the enchanting *Cupid and Psyche* frescos, and with his own hand

<sup>1</sup> His patronage of literature, which will be touched upon in Chapter VI, is of minor importance. As in matters artistic, he was also in regard to literature, which he affected more than art, *un gran dilettante*, and exercised no influence such as that exercised, perhaps unfortunately, by his father. His nature, profoundly receptive of sensuous impressions, is well delineated by himself in his well-known *Godiamoci del Papato, poichè Dio ce l'ha dato*.

<sup>2</sup> Viz. the meeting of Leo I and Attila, the crowning of Charles the Great by Leo III, the *Incendio del Borgo* extinguished by Leo IV, and his *Victory over the Saracens at Ostia*. See *Medieval Italy*, pp. 102, 298, 318.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

painted the splendid *Triumph of Galatea*, in the Villa Chigi (Farnesina). During the last few years of his short life he moreover painted at Rome many a lovely Madonna (including the *Madonna di San Sisto*) and many a wonderful portrait, and the *Sibyls* of S. Maria della Pace and the *St. Caecilia* and, lastly, the *Transfiguration*; and it is almost incredible that during this same period he directed the building of St. Peter's, having succeeded Bramante, who died in 1514, and having become the sole architect in 1516, after the death of Fra Giocondo.

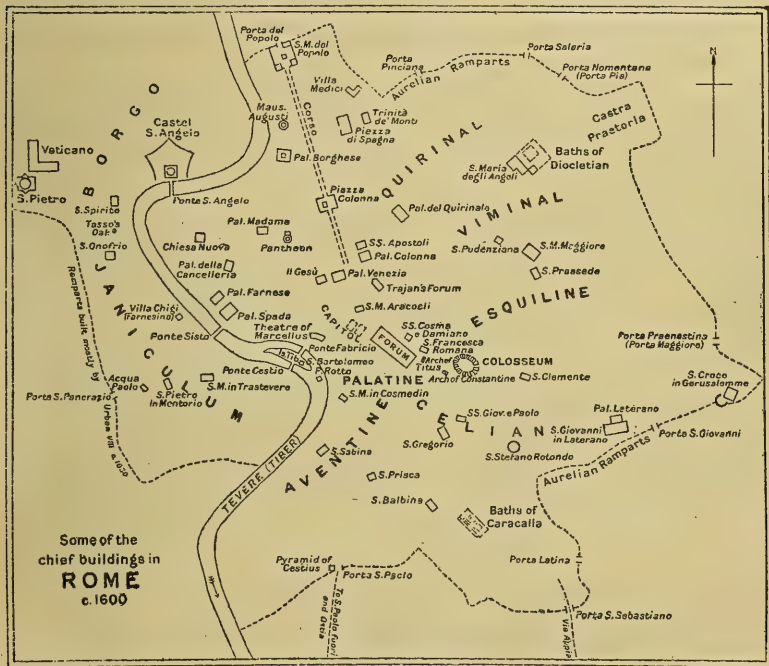
After Raphael's death architecture in Rome was represented worthily only by the two so-called 'Sansovini' (both Bramante and Giuliano da Sangallo being dead) and pictorial art lost almost wholly all real beauty, sublimity, and dignity—qualities which seem to have deserted the Roman school and to have taken refuge at Venice, paying transient visits to other North Italian cities, such as Parma. Some of the followers of Raphael, such as Giulio Romano, Penni, Garofalo, and Caravaggio, displayed indeed great talent and astonishing energy, but no painting quite first-rate was produced at Rome after the pontificate of Leo X, unless we may except Michelangelo's *Last Judgment*, the almost superhuman power of which cannot be denied. After having finished (in 1512) the ceiling frescos of the Sistine Chapel, Michelangelo had been forced by Leo to abandon his work at the vast tomb of Julius II, and had been sent to Florence, and had spent much time at Carrara endeavouring to procure and transport suitable marble for the façade and for the New Sacristy of S. Lorenzo;<sup>1</sup> and it was not till 1534, after the fall of the Florentine Republic and the death of Clement VII, that he returned to Rome. Here he spent the rest of his long life. During these 30 years he produced the huge fresco of the *Last Judgment* and the mighty statue of Moses—the chief figure of the monument to Julius II, which in 1546, 40 years after its inception, was erected, still unfinished, in

<sup>1</sup> After many months of toil at Carrara and Florence, Michelangelo was shamefully abandoned by Leo, who countermanded the work—and to this day S. Lorenzo has only a hideous rough brick façade. It was Clement VII (Giulio de' Medici) who ordered him to make the famous monuments in the New Sacristy.



## ROME (1500-1600)

S. Pietro in Vincoli. Besides this he designed various palaces of the Capitol and laid out its piazza (whither he transported from near the Lateran the famous equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius) and changed the Baths of Diocletian into a Carthusian monastery, transforming the Tepidarium into the vast church of



S. Maria degli Angeli ; <sup>1</sup> moreover, from 1546 onwards Michelangelo was the master-builder<sup>2</sup> of St. Peter's, the dome of which was his creation—unrivalled in size and in beauty of form. But, to return to Leo, besides St. Peter's very little fine church architecture was produced in Rome during his pontificate. Rome had enough churches. St. Peter's sufficed to impress both the faithful and the Schismatics. S. Giovanni, the national church of the Florentines, was the last really great church built (not

<sup>1</sup> A part of the transformed *Thermae*, including the very fine Brunelleschi-like cloisters, now houses the splendid sculptures of the Museo Nazionale.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

transformed) in Rome. The younger, more famous, Sansovino was its designer, and Michelangelo took part in its completion.

Fine palaces and other edifices, public and private, were erected in Rome during the High Renaissance. Some of these were—the beautiful Cancelleria (by Bramante), the Farnesina (by Peruzzi), the Palazzo Madama (by Raphael and Giulio Romano), and the Palazzo Farnese (by the younger Antonio da Sangallo and Michelangelo).

But such buildings served to make more conspicuous the terrible squalor and desolation of Rome. Its finest streets, often almost impassable by reason of mud and refuse, were miserably disfigured by groups of the most filthy and dilapidated medieval habitations and by gaps formed by open fields and waste spaces. The poorer classes were wretchedly poor. There was scarcely any productive labour; scarcely any agriculture or commerce. The Roman craftsman was compelled to depend on the immense hordes of prelates, of concubines, of courtiers, of courtesans. Most of the old families, such as the Gaetani, the Cenci, the Savelli, were ruined or miserably impoverished, the Colonna and Orsini being the only names that still retained their former dignity. Such was the state of things at Rome in the much-belauded High Renaissance—in the Golden Age of Leo X.

### (3) CLEMENT VII AND THE SACK OF ROME

Of Adrian VI, the mild old Flemish professor and former tutor of Charles V who was chosen to succeed Leo X and reigned for not quite two years, enough has perhaps been said in the Historical Outline, and the personality of the next Pope, Clement VII (Giulio de' Medici) is described with some detail in the chapter on Florence. It is also related in connexion with Milan (p. 473) how Clement, though it was mainly to Spanish-Austrian favour that he owed his restoration to Florence and his elevation to the Papacy, began, after the defeat and capture of the French king (Francis I) at the battle of Pavia, to share, or simulate, the indignation so widely felt by Italians at the arrogant insolence of the victors and the enslavement of Italy,

## ROME (1500-1600)

and how, encouraged by the acquisition of 10,000 valiant Swiss mercenaries, he shook himself free from his servile allegiance to the Emperor and formed a plot against him. Hereupon he was joined by Francis, who had signed a humiliating peace while a prisoner at Madrid but had determined to repudiate his promises, and by Francesco Sforza, who had been set up by Charles as Duke of Milan but had rebelled, sickened by the arrogance of the Imperialists. This 'Holy League,' which Venice and Florence and our Henry VIII somewhat uncertainly favoured, excited the fury of Charles V and brought down from beyond the Alps not only a powerful army, which took Milan and expelled the Sforza, but also a horde of some 12,000 mercenaries, mostly German Lutherans, who were fired by the desire to sack Rome and hang the Pope.<sup>1</sup> This great band of Germanic *Landsknechte*—mainly Swabians, Bavarians, and Tirolese mountaineers—was hired and led by the same Georg von Frundsberg who had commanded the German mercenaries at the battle of Pavia.

The army of the 'Holy League,' commanded by Francesco della Rovere, the reinstated Duke of Urbino, opposed but a feeble resistance, the only serious endeavour to block the path of the invader being made by papal troops under the famous captain of the *Bande Nere*, Giovanni de' Medici, who at Borgoforte on the Mincio was severely wounded by a cannon-ball, and after having had his leg amputated died at Mantua (November 30, 1526). In Lombardy the Germanic mercenaries of Frundsberg were joined by the Spanish and German troops levied by the traitor de Bourbon, and the combined army—about 30,000 men—finding but little booty left in Northern Italy ere long started Romewards, followed closely by the army of the League under the Duke of Urbino, who, however, did not dare to attack. They had not proceeded far when a

<sup>1</sup> 'When I get to Rome,' exclaimed Frundsberg, 'I will hang the Pope' (Ranke). It was reported that he carried with him a halter of gold cord which he meant to use for this purpose. At Rome just at this critical moment the Pope had great trouble with a dangerous rising of the Colonna—the ancient foes of the Papacy—who had been incited by Charles V against Clement.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

mutiny, which was caused by the non-payment of the Spanish soldiery and spread to the *Landsknechte* of Frundsberg, so affected the old *condottiere* that he became paralysed. He was put on board a boat and taken down the Po to Ferrara, where Duke Alfonso I had him carefully nursed; but his fighting days were over and he was transported to his castle of Mindelheim in Germany. The supreme command was then assumed by the Duc de Bourbon.

Too late, Clement and the Romans realized the greatness and imminence of the peril. He had appealed to France and to England—whither he sent Sir John Russell—but in vain. He now thinks of flight and plans to take ship at Civitavecchia; but having suddenly plucked up courage he creates five cardinals and uses the 40,000 ducats paid for each hat in an attempt to raise a militia, appealing fervently to the citizens to enlist and forbidding exit from the city. But although both he and the city-commandant, Renzo da Ceri, seem to have fancied Rome to be impregnable on account of its fortifications and its garrison, they were greatly mistaken, for the Borgo and the Trastevere were but poorly fortified and were dominated by the Gianicolo (Janiculum), which in that age was not enclosed by walls; <sup>1</sup> moreover, the troops hastily levied in the city were almost worthless, the Roman citizens of that age being pitifully degenerate—‘hordes of slaves and parasites, of scribes and Pharisees,’ as Gregorovius calls them—utterly untrained in the use of arms, seeing that both Leo X and Clement had forbidden them to bear weapons, as Theoderic the Ostrogoth had forbidden the Italians of his day, just a thousand years before.

Meantime de Bourbon and his hordes of Spaniards and Germans, urged on by the fanaticism of the Lutheran zealots, came rapidly nearer—with the Duke of Urbino and the federal troops loitering timidly in their rear. Their arrival at the site

<sup>1</sup> Guicciardini says that the bridges ought to have been broken. The fine city walls that now enclose the Gianicolo—similar to the Aurelian walls that enclose all Rome to the east of the Tiber—were mostly built by Urban VIII, the Barberini Pope (1623-1637) whose ‘bees’ adorn the ramparts. See illustration, p. 254.



## ROME (1500-1600)

of ancient Veii—three hours' march from Rome—had scarce been reported when they appeared on the Janiculum. Here the commander and his staff took up quarters in the convent of S. Onofrio—where some 70 years later the poet Tasso died—overlooking a part of the Leonine City and most of Rome ; and the army (about 40,000 men), encamped itself from Monte Mario to the Gianicolo, and at once began the blockade of the Città Leonina, or Borgo, the fortified quarter of the Vatican, St. Peter's, and the Castle of S. Angelo.<sup>1</sup>

Elated by the sight of Rome lying outspread before him—as it had lain, though a very different Rome, before the eyes of Lars Porsena, of Brennus, of Alaric, and of Gaiseric—and goaded by the rabid Teuton Lutherans, thirsting to destroy that city of Antichrist which to their fathers had been a sacred goal of pilgrimage, the Duc de Bourbon, after his arrogant demand for surrender had been disdainfully rejected by Pope Clement and the Romans, ordered (May 6, 1527) an assault on the ramparts of the Borgo, while feints were to be made at Ponte Milvio and at Porta S. Paolo. It was an audacious decision, for his soldiers possessed no artillery (while S. Angelo was furnished with many cannons), nor did they even possess scaling-ladders ; and the large army of the League, under the Duke of Urbino, was approaching from the north—capable, though timidly led, of taking disastrous advantage of a serious repulse of the assault.

There was a thick mist. The assailants, furnished only with ladders hastily extemporized from vines, were at first repelled with severe loss, and in the confusion the Spaniards fired on their German allies. De Bourbon, clad in gleaming armour and cloth of silver, rode excitedly along the line of battle urging his men to renew the attack ; and it seems that in order to encourage them by his example he dismounted and was helping to place a ladder, or was beginning to ascend it, when he was struck in the stomach by a bullet and fell mortally wounded, exclaiming, *Ah, notre Dame ! Je suis*

<sup>1</sup> For the Leonine City, so called because fortified by Leo IV (about 850), see *Medieval Italy*, pp. 297 n., 318.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

*mort!* He was carried to the chapel of the neighbouring Campo Santo, later called la Cappella Borbone, and there expired.<sup>1</sup> His fall, instead of discouraging, infuriated the assailants, who having gained footing on the ramparts captured several cannons and turned them with great effect against the Romans.<sup>2</sup>

The ferocious Germans and Spaniards now forced their way into the Borgo and, maddened by desperate resistance, gave no quarter. Three thousand Roman fighters fell. The Swiss papal bodyguard was massacred near the great obelisk. A gang of ruffians burst into the S. Spirito hospital and murdered almost all the patients. Such was the beginning of the terrific and sickening scenes of atrocity and bestiality which for five months, with one fairly short interval, made Rome a hell upon earth—comparable almost with those other orgies of Teutonic devilry which in the minds of most human beings are now associated with the names of Belgium and Armenia.

Pope Clement, who during the assault was on his knees in St. Peter's, had escaped to S. Angelo with a terrified crowd of cardinals and other followers—among them the English ambassador—and such was the panic that his chief chamberlain and other persons were trodden to death. Within the castle were thus assembled some 3000 fugitives, to whom the immense strength of the fortress and its powerful artillery offered security, except from famine.<sup>3</sup> The Imperialists meantime had mastered the Trastevere; then, finding the bridges but weakly defended, they succeeded in forcing the Ponte Sisto, and ere long the whole city was at their mercy, and permission

<sup>1</sup> Aged 38. He is described as tall and blond, but an old engraving given by Gregorovius makes him dark. The bullet was perhaps fired by an Imperialist—some say by a priest—possibly by mistake. The absurd braggart Benvenuto Cellini, in his *Autobiography*, claims to have killed de Bourbon.

<sup>2</sup> This all took place near the Porta di S. Spirito, newly built by Ant. da Sangallo in the place of the old 'Saxon Gate,' not far from the church and hospital of S. Spirito della Sassia, which belonged originally to the Anglo-Saxon colony. See *Medieval Italy*, pp. 297 n., 318 n.

<sup>3</sup> With the Pope were 13 cardinals. The garrison included 90 Swiss and 400 Italian fighters. Serving as bombardier in the castle was Benvenuto Cellini.

## ROME (1500-1600)

to sack was publicly granted by the commanders (none of whom, after the fall of Constable Bourbon, had any real authority) to the exultant and bloodthirsty soldiery, collected in the Piazza Navona and the Campo di Fiore.

I shall not attempt to describe fully what perhaps has never been equalled in the world's history for pitiless inhumanity and bestiality, except in our 20th century of the Christian era. A few facts will allow us to reconstruct scenes like those to which of late we became so accustomed. Palaces, churches, convents, and every building where plunder could be found, say the chroniclers, were ravaged and often 'blown up with mines,' when great fines were not paid. The streets resounded, says Guicciardini, with the cries of women—Roman matrons and young girls and nuns dragged away from their hiding-places and sanctuaries to a fate worse than death—and the shrieks of those tortured to extort the revelation of hidden treasure.<sup>1</sup> Fanatic fury vented itself in despoiling, desecrating, and defiling all holy places. Soldiers and loose females held revelry in churches, seated on the altars and carousing from sacred vessels; tombs were ransacked; the relics of saints and martyrs were profaned;<sup>2</sup> comic parodies of High Mass were performed in the chief churches, and such disgustingly irreverent scenes took place as the offering of the sacred wafer to a donkey seated on its haunches and clad in priestly robes.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The 'Lady of the Renaissance,' Isabella d'Este, was in Rome during the first week of these horrors. She then escaped *via* Ostia and Civitavecchia. Her son Ercole was one of the new cardinals; the other, Ferrante, was a general in de Bourbon's army.

<sup>2</sup> Among them the heads of SS. Peter and Paul—still believed to be preserved in the Lateran basilica—and the (fragmentary) head of St. John the Baptist, still in S. Silvestro, the church of English Catholics. The 'Veronica' (it is stated in a contemporary letter) 'passed through a thousand hands and made the round of all the taverns in Rome.'

<sup>3</sup> The priest who was commanded to offer the host to the animal swallowed the wafer to save it from desecration and was at once killed for his courageous act. Gregorovius, whose *History of the City of Rome* is a magnificent specimen of modern German research, is naturally untrustworthy when his fellow-Germans are in question. He attributes almost all the atrocities and profanities to the Catholic Spaniards, affirming that the Germans showed their 'more humane and less rapacious character' by indignant protests and threats.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

The injury done to works of art—architecture, sculpture, and painting—was enormous. The Flemish tapestries designed by Raphael disappeared. (They were, however, restored to Julius III in 1553.) Literature too suffered severely. Many priceless classics and medieval manuscripts vanished—such things being used as bedding for the horses stabled in libraries and churches. The Vatican Library, fortunately, escaped total ruin by the favour of the Prince of Orange, but so many public archives and other valuable collections were destroyed that the history of medieval Rome is still very incomplete.

Meantime Pope Clement and his 3000 fellow-prisoners gazed in vain from the ramparts of S. Angelo in hope of the approach of the federal forces. These, under the command of Francesco Maria of Urbino and Luigi Guicciardini, brother to the historian, after long and aggravating delays at Perugia and Orvieto effected junction with papal troops and were joined by many fugitives from Rome. But cowardice and inertia—perhaps also treachery—prevented any attempt being made to surprise and overwhelm the plunderers and assassins at their nefarious work, although it would have probably been crowned with success, for the demoralization of the Spanish-German troops was great, and like two packs of hyenas they were frequently at the point of tearing one another to pieces over their prey.

In June Clement capitulated and S. Angelo was occupied by the Imperialists. So huge an indemnity was demanded that the Pope had to melt down crosses and chalices and many other such priceless treasures to coin the necessary money. He even handed over to Benvenuto Cellini the papal tiara for this purpose. The bulk of the Spaniards and Germans then left Rome; but the Pope was still detained as prisoner in the castle, until he succeeded in escaping to Orvieto, disguised and concealed 'in the bottom of a litter.' In September, after the heat of the summer had decreased, the invaders returned, and the state of things at Rome became almost worse than ever. However, in February of 1528 they determined to march homewards, and some months later Clement, having accepted terms offered by Charles, ventured to return. Thereupon





52. POPE CLEMENT VII AND CHARLES V



53.

(a) GIOVANNI DELLE BANDE NERE



(b) IPPOLITO DE' MEDICI

469

## R O M E (1500-1600)

Charles, who could now afford to be generous, proposed conditions to his rival, Francis I, which were accepted at the Peace of Cambrai,<sup>1</sup> and in the same year (1529) Clement made with the Emperor a final compact which was secretly ratified at Barcelona.

Charles undertook, amongst other things, to reinstate Francesco Sforza at Milan and to give his own (illegitimate) daughter,<sup>2</sup> Margaret, to Alessandro the Moor, the bastard Medici claimant, who had been expelled by the Florentines. This naturally involved the imposition by force on Florence of this most odious personage—a result attained by the famous siege of that city and the fall of the Florentine Republic (1530). But before this took place there was held at Bologna with great pomp and ceremony a Council. To this Council Charles V himself came, taking ship at Barcelona and setting foot for the first time on Italian soil at Genoa. Then, having confirmed all his previous conditions, having imposed an enormous indemnity on the recalcitrant Venetians, and having graciously conceded a fictitious freedom to the Genoese under Spanish-Austrian protection, he sealed, as it were, the death-warrant of Italian liberty by placing on his own head the famous Iron Crown of the Lombard kings<sup>3</sup> and by condescending to accept, two days later, from the hands of Clement the golden coronal and the ridiculous title of *Imperator Romanorum*.

As regards the last twelve Cinquecento Popes, the few facts already given in the Historical Outline will have to suffice, for I have yet much to say on the more important and interesting topics of Florence and Venice, and there is a vast amount of material from which I shall have to select when endeavouring to give slight sketches of the literature and art of this century.

<sup>1</sup> The 'Ladies' League'—so called from the important part taken by Margaret, the aunt of Charles, and the Dowager Queen Louise of Savoy.

<sup>2</sup> Margaret of Parma—later Regent of the Netherlands for Philip II.

<sup>3</sup> Sent for this purpose from Monza. For the Iron and the Imperial Crowns see *Medieval Italy*, pp. xviii, 228, where pictures are given. The coronation took place in S. Petronio. Charles was the last German 'Emperor' crowned by a Pope.



## CHAPTER II

### MILAN (1500-1600)

IT is only during the first third of the century that the story of Cinquecento Milan interweaves itself with that of other Italian states, and perhaps enough has been said on this theme in the Historical Outline. But, besides the question of art, there are a few episodes and personalities that offer tempting subjects to the sketcher, and I shall select three of these, namely, the battle of Pavia, the last of the Sforza dukes, and San Carlo Borromeo.

#### (I) THE BATTLE OF PAVIA

In 1515 the foolish Maximilian, Lodovico Sforza's eldest son, who had been set up as Duke of Milan by Pope Julius II and his *Lega Santa*, surrendered to the new French king, Francis I, abdicated, and was taken to France. For the next six years Milan was ruled by French governors. Then, in 1521, the French were ejected by the forces of the young Charles V and those of Leo X, and Maximilian's younger and far more capable brother, Francesco, was made Duke. In 1524, however, King Francis made up his mind to reacquire the duchy, and his determination was strengthened by the fact that one of his best generals, the premier noble of France, the Grand Connétable de Bourbon, had lately deserted to the camp of Charles V, and had not only become the Imperial Governor of Milan, in which city he had formerly been the French Viceroy, but had even had the audacity to invade the South of France with Imperial forces and to besiege Marseille itself.<sup>1</sup> The French army of about 50,000 men, among whom

<sup>1</sup> His desertion was caused, it is said, by the importunate widow of Louis XII, who was enraged at his refusal to marry her. For his end see the Sack of Rome in the last chapter.



## MILAN (1500-1600)

were the flower of the French chivalry (the *hommes d'armes*, the special cavalry escort of the King) besides many Swiss and also German mercenaries, entered Milan; for this city, except the Castello, the Imperialists had abandoned in October 1524—perhaps partly on account of the terrible ravages of the Black Death, which, says Guicciardini, carried off 50,000 Milanese. Unwisely detaching a large body of his troops to besiege the Castello, Francis went on to attack the stronghold of Pavia, 20 miles south of Milan, defended by Spaniards and 4000 Germans. The assaults of the French having been bloodily repulsed, they sat down to invest the place, and for about three months they pressed it hard, for they had 53 pieces of artillery against 16 of the enemy's.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile the Imperialists, assembled at Lodi—some 20 miles to the north-east—had received large reinforcements, many of which had been collected by Connétable de Bourbon in South Germany, while others were brought over the Alps by the gigantic and famous captain of German mercenaries, Georg von Frundsberg; and ere long the French, with the ramparts of hostile Pavia at their rear and the Ticino on their left, found themselves hemmed in by the advancing foe. After 20 days of skirmishing—during which the French lost many good fighters, especially that Giovanni delle Bande Nere whose son became Duke Cosimo of Florence<sup>2</sup>—the Imperialists, Spaniards, and German *Landsknechte* opened a breach in the massive north wall of the great park of the Visconti Castle,<sup>3</sup> and within this park took place a furious battle. It ended in the complete rout of the French—the

<sup>1</sup> Francis tried, but in vain, to divert the Ticino, which defends Pavia on the south and west. During these months Pope Clement VII intrigued with both sides, anxious to hasten to the aid of the victor.

<sup>2</sup> He was placed *hors de combat* by a serious wound. He died the following year, having been again wounded when opposing the descent of the Lutheran hordes against Rome.

<sup>3</sup> Built by Galeazzo II about 1360. See Index. This park of Mirabello was stocked with game for hunting purposes. The unfortunate Duke Gian Galeazzo Sforza, it will be remembered, was practically a prisoner in the Castello for years, and died there (1494). The inner court with its arcaded gallery is a fine specimen of belated Gothic.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

Duke of Alençon, with all the chivalry of France, followed by the panic-stricken Swiss, fleeing in terror before the belching artillery of their assailants. Great was the massacre (Guicciardini gives it at 8000) and many were the captives. King Francis, recognized by his splendid attire and the great golden chain of the order of St. Michael, was closely pressed, and at length, his horse being killed under him, he was captured.<sup>1</sup> He was, it is said, in a piteous state, his robes rent to tatters, covered with mud and stained with blood, his helmet-plume, his sword-belt, his golden chain, his tunic of silver cloth torn off him by the soldiery. Then came up Lannoy, the Neapolitan Viceroy of the Emperor, and to him Francis surrendered.

Lannoy, deeply moved—says Gregorovius—kneelt and kissed the King's hand, and received, kneeling, the sword that Francis offered him, offering him in turn his own. Then other Imperialist commanders came and did reverence to the fallen monarch. Even the renegade de Bourbon, approaching him with shamefaced mien, attempted to kiss his hand; but Francis withdrew it.<sup>2</sup>

When the news was brought to Charles V in his castle at Madrid he, it is said, grew pale and repeated aloud the words of the messenger, as if to assure himself that he was not dreaming; then he suddenly became silent and withdrew to his chamber. 'To his imagination,' says the German Gregorovius, 'revealed itself the prospect of a boundless empire'; and he adds—what gives us just at present much matter for rumination—that the bitter struggle for the hegemony of Europe that has raged so many centuries between the Latin and Germanic races began to take its definite modern form in the contest that ended triumphantly for Germany (he seems to forget Spain) at the battle of Pavia, and he intimates that this triumph was reasserted and eternalized on the field of

<sup>1</sup> When summoned to surrender to the 'Duc de Bourbon,' Francis replied, 'I know no Duc de Bourbon but myself.'

<sup>2</sup> De Bourbon served the King at dinner on that same evening, and is said (by Sanudo the diarist) to have burst into a flood of tears. Francis was for a time confined in the Rocca of Pizzichettone on the Adda, not far from Cremona; for Francesco II objected to his presence in Milan.

## MILAN (1500-1600)

Sedan, 'where the captive French Emperor gave over his sword to King Wilhelm of Prussia, re-founder of the German Empire, and *together with his sword gave over to him the sceptre of European supremacy.*'

### (2) FRANCESCO SFORZA II

In 1526 King Francis was liberated on signing at Madrid a humiliating treaty, by which he renounced all claims in Italy, ceded Burgundy, promised to marry a sister of Charles, to restore the traitor de Bourbon to his rights, and to send his own sons to Spain as hostages. But as soon as he found himself again in France he retracted these promises, made under compulsion, being strongly urged to do so by many of his friends, and even by Clement VII. Thus war again became inevitable. The fickle and ambitious Clement, who like Leo X was ever ready to play off one invader against the other for Medicean interests, formed a new Holy League, directed against Spain and Austria. It was joined by France and, in a nominal fashion, by our Henry VIII, by Florence, by Venice, and by Francesco Sforza, who—made Duke by the Spaniards in 1521, and driven out by the French in 1524—had been re-established in Milan by Charles after the battle of Pavia, but had found enslavement to his Imperial master intolerable.

This state of things determined Charles to act vigorously. Spanish troops invested Francesco Sforza in his Castello, and after the League had made a vain attempt to relieve him by sending the valiant Giovanni de' Medici with his *Bande Nere*, he was once more obliged to abandon Milan (1526). Then, incited by Charles, came pouring down over the Alps those Germanic hordes which, finding in North Italy not sufficient plunder, swept southwards, first under the command of Frundsberg, and then of the traitor de Bourbon, and in 1527 sacked Rome—as has been related in the preceding chapter.

At Milan several risings against the Spaniards were brutally suppressed. No noble came forward as a leader, and the people seem to have been more grossly ignorant of the meaning of liberty than they were even in the days of the Visconti. Some

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

three years after the sack of Rome Francesco II found it advisable to humiliate himself. He was graciously pardoned and reinstated in his dukedom by Charles when, in 1530, that potentate was crowned by Pope Clement at Bologna as 'Emperor of the Romans.'

Terrible was the state of Milan during the so-called government of this puppet of the Spanish-Austrian court, for both before and after the battle of Pavia there were many occasions on which the savage French and Imperial soldiery were let loose on the desolated and plague-stricken city. And as a vivid contrast to all these horrors we find something that reminds one of that which took place (if we can believe Boccaccio) when, some two hundred years earlier, Florence was turned into a charnel-house by the Black Death: 'I mean the gay and not always very decent world of Milanese rank and fashion, as it existed during this tragic era in city and in camp and is described in many of the sometimes vividly dramatic but often rather long-winded *Novelle* of Bandello—that 'Lombard Boccaccio' who knew well the courts of the Sforza and of Isabella of Mantua and, Dominican *frate* though he was, took active part in the campaigns of the Holy League against Charles during the years that followed the battle of Pavia.<sup>1</sup>

In 1535 Francesco II died. He left no heir. An illegitimate Sforza, son of the Moro's mistress, Lucrezia Crivelli, hurried off, it is said, in order to induce Pope Paul III to support his claims; but he died before he reached Rome. The Milanese dukedom then reverted to the 'Holy Roman Empire'—though at first it was administered by Charles and his successors as kings of Spain. It was not till 1714 that it passed, with the rest of Lombardy, under the rule of Austria.

### (3) S. CARLO BORROMEO

The name at least of San Carlo Borromeo, if not a good deal more than his name, is known to almost all who have visited, or even hurriedly traversed, the lovely region of Stresa and

<sup>1</sup> See chapter on Literature. What Bandello tells us of Leonardo da Vinci and Machiavelli and Giovanni de' Medici (*Bande Nere*) is most interesting.



## MILAN (1500-1600)

the Borromean Islands and have seen the huge bronzen statue of the Saint that stands on a height overlooking Arona and the southern waters of Lago Maggiore ; and many who have visited Milan Cathedral will remember the gloomily resplendent *Cappella* where he lies buried.

The family of the Borromei is one of the most ancient and noble in Milan—descended doubtless from some pious ancestor who had won the name ' the good Rome-pilgrim ' (*buon roméo*). Carlo was born, at Arona, in 1538. His uncle, Pope Pius IV, one of the Milanese Medici, created him cardinal in 1559, and the next year he became Archbishop of Milan. His inherited wealth was vastly increased by his many important benefices, so that he became probably the richest ecclesiastical dignitary of that period. The character of the man displayed strange contradictions—strangely opposite tendencies. Thus we find in him a boundless love of pomp and a haughty glorification of office as prelate not easily compatible with that almost ascetic contempt for luxury and for money which he professed when he renounced for charitable purposes the greater part of his benefices. Nor did his crusade against the evils of riches—when not used for what he regarded as the true ends of the Church—limit itself to such self-renunciation. He attacked fiercely an Order of which he did not approve, the *Umiliati*, and succeeded in alienating all their wealth in favour of the Jesuits and other religious bodies that enjoyed his approval. But perhaps the most startling proof of the contradictory nature of the man is afforded by two facts which remain deeply imprinted in the memories of those who have ever read his life. The first of these facts is that so bitter was his hatred of everything tending towards freedom of thought that he suppressed it with the zeal of a Dominic and filled his archiepiscopal dungeons with victims destined to torture, and often to death. The second is the undeniable courage and devotion that he showed during the terrific visitation of the Plague in 1576 ; and it is doubtless well that *this* episode of his life is the one which one generally associates with the name of San Carlo Borromeo.

## CHAPTER III

### FLORENCE (1500-1600)

THE connexions of Florence with political movements in Italy during the Cinquecento have been indicated in the Historical Outline. I have now to select a few episodes and personalities for somewhat fuller treatment. For the period 1500-1512, during which still existed, with one important modification, the general form of republican government instituted by Savonarola, we may accept as our main theme the personality and rule of Piero Soderini. Then I shall sketch the period 1512-1527, during which the restored Medici held power, until the expulsion of the bastard claimants, Alessandro and Ippolito. Next I shall describe briefly the siege of Florence by the Imperial and papal army, and the establishment of Alessandro as Duke—events due to the reconciliation of the Medici Pope, Clement VII, with the Emperor Charles V after the sack of Rome and the Council of Bologna (p. 469). Lastly, I shall give a few facts in connexion with Duke Cosimo I and his sons Francesco I and Ferdinand I.

#### (I) PIERO SODERINI

Machiavelli was professedly a republican, for he was the secretary of the Republic from the death of Savonarola (1498) to the return of the Medici in 1512; but he held that city to be fortunate <sup>1</sup> in which 'a wise and good and powerful citizen arises to administer the laws and keep in order the advocates of licence (which they call liberty) and the advocates of slavery.'

<sup>1</sup> See p. 306 n. Also in his *Discourse* on the Reformation of the Florentine Government, written for Leo X, he advocates a 'genuine republic' with a Medicean constitutional despot—a curious hybrid! He probably wrote the letter addressed by the Ten to Soderini, in which similar ideas are expounded.

## FLORENCE (1500-1600)

He was no admirer of Savonarola and probably was not thinking of him when he wrote that passage, but the great Friar had to some extent fulfilled these requirements. As 'constitutional despot,' such as the so-called republic of Florence seemed to need, he had abolished the complicated system of the old councils and magistracies that had been retained as an unused survival by the Medici, and had instituted a governing body composed of Gonfaloniere, Signoria, Senate, and Great Council.<sup>1</sup> And this constitution, with one very momentous change, prevailed from the expulsion of Piero de' Medici in 1494 until the restoration of his brothers in 1512. The momentous change—one which showed the inevitable tendency of such a mock-republic—was the election of a Gonfaloniere *for life*.

Things had gone on badly since the death of Savonarola. Lodovico of Milan, just at that time at the meridian of his power, had helped Florence in its vain attempts to reconquer Pisa. Then, when he was attacked by Louis XII, the Florentines meanly deserted him, and during the triumph of Louis at Milan and his infamous campaign against Naples in collusion with Ferdinand the Catholic—during also the infamous proceedings of Pope Alexander and Caesar Borgia—they remained in cowardly silence, being far more interested in their party broils at home than in any question affecting their patriotism as Italians. 'It is difficult,' wrote Guicciardini, 'to imagine any city so thoroughly disorganized and misruled as ours was at this epoch.' This he attributed<sup>2</sup> mainly to the frequent changes in the magistracies, and, like his friend Machiavelli, he was of the opinion that, considering the odium with which a despot was regarded, and the suspicions aroused by an oligarchy (such as the Venetian *Pregadi*), the wisest course was that adopted by the Senate and the Great Council, viz. to elect a Gonfaloniere, not as usual for two months, but for life, 'like the Venetian Doge.'

<sup>1</sup> Of about 1200 members, viz. a third of those citizens eligible, and never less than 500. Hence the name given to the great Hall in the Palazzo Vecchio.

<sup>2</sup> *Storia d'Italia*, ii, 3. See also quotation from Dante on pp. 89-90.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

Piero Soderini, who was elected (September 1502), was brother to the Bishop of Florence and had lately been Gonfaloniere. Although of an ancient and rich family he was, says Villari, known as a lover of the people and of free government. 'He was a good speaker, had no children, no great energy, and no great gifts such as to excite excessive hate or love.' Machiavelli, who was intimate with the Soderini family, forthwith became Piero's trusted counsellor, and it was he who instigated the few energetic acts that make the Gonfaloniere's reign noticeable.

The first of these was an unsuccessful attempt to reduce Pisa; for since the invasion of Italy by Charles VIII in 1494 Pisa had been in a state of revolt and of constant war with Florence. This attempt was made by Soderini in 1504, and Machiavelli, who had gone on an embassy to France, on his return to Florence vigorously supported Soderini's ambitious design of depriving Pisa of her outlet to the sea by diverting the Arno into the marshes of Livorno (Leghorn). Thousands of workmen were ordered from Tuscan towns. Two deep and broad canals were cut, and a dam was thrown across the river, but the river-bed was raised by the obstruction and the canals failed to act, and the enterprise was abandoned after the expenditure of immense labour and great sums of money.

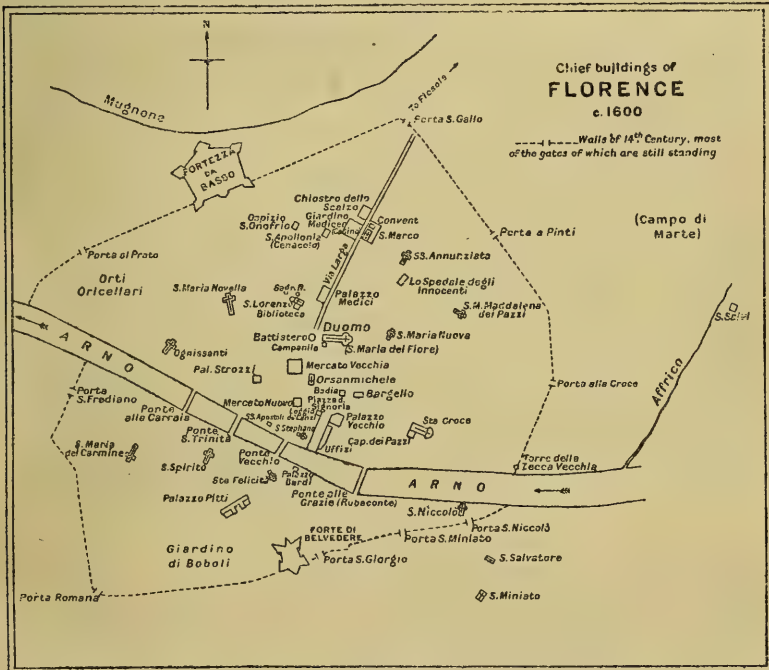
In spite of the violent opposition of his ever more numerous political foes Soderini made another attempt on Pisa, which failed deplorably through the cowardice of the Florentine troops after their artillery had opened a large breach in the city walls. This failure induced Machiavelli to suggest a well-trained force of republican militia—or rather an army like that of the Swiss—and after his return from an embassy to the militant Pope Julius II, at this time at the head of his victorious troops at Bologna,<sup>1</sup> he set to work zealously, with the support of Soderini, at carrying out the idea, scouring Tuscany in quest of men and horses. This force, though comparatively small, proved for many years of great benefit

<sup>1</sup> See p. 451, where Michelangelo's statue of Julius is mentioned.



FLORENCE (1500-1600)

to the Republic, and distinguished itself especially in the famous siege of 1529-1530. It is worthy of notice that the political adversaries of Soderini made much of the fact that the formation of such a civic guard has very often proved an important step towards despotism.



The cyclonic tempest that swept down upon Venice after the League of Cambrai affected Florence but little. Its attention was still concentrated on the acquisition of Pisa, and shortly before Pope Julius suddenly changed sides and helped the Venetians to expel the French 'barbarians' from North Italy this gallant little city was so closely besieged by the new Florentine army that it was forced by famine to capitulate (1509). The terms exacted by the Florentines, says the contemporary chronicler Nardi, were so mild that 'it seemed as if the Pisans themselves had dictated them.' This

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

fact redounds mainly, Villari opines, to the honour of Soderini and Machiavelli.

During the war waged by Pope Julius and his Holy League against the *barbari*, which ended, after the battle of Ravenna, in the expulsion of the French from all Northern Italy, Florence found itself in a difficult position as an old ally both of the Papacy and of Louis XII. It had furnished the French with 300 lancers, but these had won only ingratitude and the contemptuous *sobriquet* of 'Traitors.' Then, when the French cause was lost and the Florentines felt obliged to negotiate with the Pope and his allies, their envoy to a Diet held at Mantua was 'fed derisively with empty words' and soon discovered that the only terms obtainable included the return of the Medici—nominally as private citizens. The consternation at Florence was great. Soderini, feeling himself doomed, made his will. Machiavelli, with more courage, made desperate efforts to collect troops from Tuscany and to prepare his artillery. Meanwhile Cardona, the Spanish Viceroy of Naples, and Cardinal Giovanni, with 5000 Spanish veteran footmen and 300 knights (*uomini d'arme*), rapidly approached. Some 9000 Florentine troops, ill-trained civic militia (*Ordinanza*), or raw recruits, were encamped outside the walls, and about 3000 were sent to Prato to resist the aggressors; but Prato was taken after a breach had been made in its walls by the one cannon of the Spaniards that proved serviceable and the Florentine *Ordinanza* had failed to sustain the assault. A terrible massacre then took place; the city was sacked and many atrocities and bestialities were perpetrated.<sup>1</sup>

Cardona now offered still more arrogant conditions to Florence. He demanded openly the abolition of the Republic, the restoration of the Medici as rulers, and the payment of an indemnity of 150,000 ducats. Cardinal Giovanni, says Villari, was from Cardona's camp in constant correspondence

<sup>1</sup> Guicciardini gives 2000 victims. But they were probably twice as many; for he alters facts to the advantage of the Medici. 'He pretends,' says Villari, 'that Card. Giovanni stopped the massacre and saved the women—which is not asserted even in the letter of the Cardinal to Pope Julius.'

## FLORENCE (1500-1600)

with the powerful party within the city that ever since the frivolous and despised Piero was drowned in the Garigliano had favoured a return of the Medicean despotism, while they had obstinately opposed Soderini—as aiming at despotic power.<sup>1</sup> The crafty Giulio too, Giovanni's bastard cousin—afterwards Pope Clement VII—secretly met some of these conspirators at an outlying villa; and on the last day of August 1512 a band of audacious youths burst into the Palazzo Vecchio and compelled Soderini to resign. He was given safe-conduct to Siena, whence he made his way to Ragusa; but, not feeling secure even here, he withdrew to Turkish territory. Finally, on the invitation of Giovanni de' Medici himself—now Pope Leo X—he ventured to take up his abode at Rome, where he died in 1521, shortly after Pope Leo. His tomb, as well as that of his brother, Cardinal Soderini, is to be seen among the very numerous monuments of the church of S. Maria del Popolo. The character and rule of Soderini are condemned very severely by modern partisans of the Medici. I prefer to accept the judgment of Villari, who shows that even Soderini's political adversaries could find no grounds of complaint except that he tried to effect by gentleness what they thought to be attainable by force alone.

### (2) THE RESTORED MEDICI (1512-27)

Machiavelli allows that even those who disapproved of the return of the Medici soon reconciled themselves to it; and it must be allowed that the two sons of Lorenzo il Magnifico and their cousin Giulio seem to have taken no inhumanly vindictive measures. The younger brother, Giuliano, who was only 15 years old when the Medici were ejected in 1494, and who was therefore now a man of 33, became at first the real ruler of Florence, for Cardinal Giovanni and Giulio—the illegitimate son of that elder Giuliano de' Medici whom we know so well in connexion with the *Giostra* and the Pazzi

<sup>1</sup> Being unable, says Villari, to blame his political rectitude and his strict administration, they loudly repeated hackneyed accusations against too personal rule, etc.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

conspiracy—ere long went off to Rome, where some five months after the fall of the Florentine Republic Pope Julius had died (February 1513). And here Giovanni was elected as his successor, as is narrated in the chapter on the Papacy.

During the first years of his long exile Giuliano had resided much with Guidobaldo of Urbino and his Duchess, Elisabetta Gonzaga, and doubtless the refined influences of that court<sup>1</sup> had developed the better traits of his character, which seems to have been of a much finer mould than that of his sensuous and egotistical brother, Pope Leo, or that of his clever and ambitious cousin Giulio. It is therefore not surprising that shortly after his accession Leo X, evidently counselled by the clever Giulio, decided that his brother was too generous, unambitious, and kindly a despot to uphold and extend the princely power of the family; so he transferred him to Rome, giving him the office of Gonfaloniere of the Church,<sup>2</sup> and as Magnifico of Florence—a mere papal puppet—was instituted the frivolous and brainless young Lorenzo, son of the foolish Piero.

From Pope Leo, his uncle, Lorenzo received Machiavellian instructions as to securing power by a fictitious respect for republican institutions, by hypocritical liberality and affability, and by filling all important offices with his satellites. It seems, however, that—in spite of the fact that Machiavelli dedicated to him his *Principe*—he did not live up to these precepts, for we find that, as Mr. Gardner says, 'he discarded the republican appearances which his grandfather had maintained and surrounded himself with courtiers and soldiers.' The soldiers were perhaps necessary, for plots were rife—one of which merits mention seeing that the name of Machiavelli,

<sup>1</sup> Described by Castiglione in his *Cortegiano*, where we find an attractive picture of Giuliano.

<sup>2</sup> In Michelangelo's fine statue (Fig. 59 (a)) Giuliano holds the baton in his hand. In 1515 Giuliano was sent by Leo to congratulate Francis I on his accession, and married a relative of the French king, and was made Duke of Nemours. He died (1516) at the Badia of Fiesole, and with his last breath, it is said, he tried to persuade his brother, Pope Leo, who was at his bedside, to renounce his design of dispossessing the Duke of Urbino, whose dukedom he himself had indignantly refused.



## FLORENCE (1500-1600)

though he was probably quite innocent, was found in a list of accomplices that was picked up in the street. He was imprisoned and tortured, and although set free he was compelled to withdraw almost entirely from political life.

In 1516 Lorenzo was commissioned by his uncle, Pope Leo, to attack Urbino at the head of papal forces and to eject Duke Francesco Maria della Rovere (nephew of Leo's hated predecessor, Julius II). This infamous act was perpetrated, and the Pope conferred the title of Duke of Urbino on Lorenzo—a title that Lorenzo's uncle had rejected with scorn.

In 1518 Lorenzo went to France, for here the ambitious designs of Pope Leo and Cardinal Giulio had secured him a beautiful bride—a relative of King Francis, who a year later died in giving birth to a daughter, afterwards French queen, Catherine de Médicis; and six days later Lorenzo followed her, 'worn out,' we are told, 'by dissolute living at the age of 27.'

The internal history of Florence from the death of Lorenzo II down to the third expulsion of the Medici (1527) offers but little in the way of interesting political episodes or personages. On Lorenzo's death Cardinal Giulio de' Medici governed Florence, not unsuccessfully, for five months. Then Leo X sent Cardinal Passerini, who 'misruled the city' for several years; but in spite of this he was re-instated when Giulio ascended the papal throne as Clement VII (1523).

Cardinal Passerini had been entrusted with the care of the three children on whom the ambitious Medicean Popes founded their hopes for the future greatness of the family—that is, of the elder branch of the Medicean family. One was the little Caterina, a daughter of Lorenzo II, now 4 years of age. The second, sent by Leo from Rome, was Ippolito, a handsome youth of 15, who was probably the illegitimate son of Giuliano (Duke of Nemours). The third, Alessandro, was sent from Naples, where he had been brought up. He was a dark-skinned boy, of about 13 years, with the thick

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

lips and woolly hair of a negro.<sup>1</sup> His mother (says the Florentine historian Gino Capponi) was a mulatto slave. His father was, almost indubitably, Pope Clement, who favoured his claims strongly as against Ippolito, but passed him off as an illegitimate son of the lately deceased Lorenzo II.

It was during Passerini's rule, and his guardianship of these three children, that took place the great struggle between the Spanish-Austrians (Charles V) and the French (Francis I) which ended in the battle of Pavia (1525) and the capture of the French king. Two years later Rome was captured and sacked by the wild hordes of German and Spanish mercenaries, and Pope Clement, after being besieged in S. Angelo, took to flight. Thereupon the republican party in Florence plucked up courage and expelled Passerini, together with the two young Medici bastards.

### (3) THE SIEGE OF FLORENCE

On the expulsion of the two illegitimate claimants the 'little Duchess' (*Duchessina*), as Caterina was wrongly called (for the rightful Duke of Urbino had been restored), was retained as a hostage by the Signoria of the revived Republic, and ultimately disappeared from Italy.<sup>2</sup> She was the last legitimate descendant of the elder branch of the Medici family—and with her this branch ends, except for one other lady (her aunt), who rightly claimed to be 'of the true Medici,' and who exhibited a very just indignation at the attempt of Pope Clement (himself a bastard Medici) to foist as ruler on the Florentine people the illegitimate Ippolito, or Alessandro 'the Moor.' This was Clarice, daughter of

<sup>1</sup> Vividly depicted in the portrait of Alessandro by Bronzini (Uffizi). Lorenzo de' Medici, who assassinated Alessandro in 1537, vowed that Clement believed himself to be the father but was deceived, and that there was therefore no Medici blood in Alessandro's veins.

<sup>2</sup> She was confined for some years in the once famous convent of the Murate ('Walled-up Nuns')—now a public prison—where she experienced periods of great terror, especially during the siege. After the establishment of Alessandro as ruler she was conveyed to Rome, and in 1533 was married to Henry of Orleans (later Henry II) and became the mother-in-law of Mary Queen of Scots. The problem of her character lies beyond my scope.

## FLORENCE (1500-1600)

Piero 'the Unfortunate,' whom she seems to have excelled very far in strength of character, as well as her frivolous and foolish brother, Lorenzo. She had married the younger Filippo Strozzi—an adversary of the Medici—and had been permitted by the republican Government to return to Florence. Here she was the first mistress of the great Strozzi Palace, which for many years had been rising under the direction of Benedetto da Maiano, Cronaca, and other architects. She certainly merits a passing notice, for most notable is the scene described by chroniclers in which, entering a room of the Medici Palace where Passerini and his two *protégés* were anxiously discussing the news of the sack of Rome and its possible effects in Florence, she proudly bade the youths pack and be gone, seeing that they were no true Medici, and that the family honour depended on her alone.

But there was another branch of the family, and ere long, after the brief resuscitation of the Republic (1527-1530), and fall of Florence, and the *vergogna*, as Michelangelo calls it,<sup>1</sup> of Duke Alessandro's reign, this younger branch was to supersede the elder in the person of Duke Cosimo I. Of these younger Medici both the Medicean Popes, Leo X and Clement VII, were fiercely jealous and contemptuous. But the efforts of Clement, himself illegitimate, to impose on Florence his own half-mulatto bastard as a true member of the elder family naturally excited intense indignation. The expulsion of Alessandro and Ippolito caused therefore an outburst of delight among the Florentines.

The re-established Republic, first with Niccolò Capponi (son of the famous Piero) and then with Fr. Carducci as Gonfaloniere, lasted about three years. It will be remembered that, after being besieged for seven months in S. Angelo, Pope Clement had fled from Rome in miserable plight, disguised as a pedlar, and for a year had found refuge at Orvieto and Viterbo. He now began to realize that it was useless trying to resist the power of the Emperor, Charles V, with whom even the French king, Francis I, was making terms. In June

<sup>1</sup> See p. 552.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

1529 he therefore betook himself to Spain, and at Barcelona concluded with the Emperor a secret compact.<sup>1</sup> The terms of this compact, combined with the concessions of Francis at the so-called Ladies' Peace of Cambrai, gave the Spanish-Austrian power undisputed supremacy in Italy—a fact confirmed by the Council at Bologna, where, in February 1530, Clement crowned Charles as *Imperator Romanorum*. The secret Barcelona compact had determined that an Imperial army (the very army, says Ranke, that had sacked Rome) was to be lent to Clement in order to attack Florence, abolish the Republic, and establish Alessandro as Duke and as vassal of the Emperor, whose illegitimate daughter, Margaret, he was to marry.<sup>2</sup>

Florence made brave preparation.<sup>3</sup> The militia, first organized by Machiavelli (who had died in 1527), was called out for the defence of the city; a considerable army under Francesco Ferruccio took to the open country; all vineyards, orchards, groves, houses, villas, and even churches in proximity to the city walls were destroyed, so as to afford no cover to the enemy.<sup>4</sup> The high ground on which S. Miniato stands outside the walls was especially marked for attack, commanding as it does the whole of Florence. It was therefore strengthened by bastions (relics of which are still visible) designed by Michelangelo, which formed a loop from the Porta S. Miniato to the

<sup>1</sup> It was during this critical period that our Henry VIII was vainly urging Clement to sanction his divorce from Catherine of Aragon, the aunt of Charles.

<sup>2</sup> She was as yet only 9 years old, and only 15 when the marriage took place in 1536, at S. Lorenzo, Florence. Six months later she was a widow. She was then married to a boy of 13, Ottavio Farnese. (The Palazzo Madama in Rome is called after her.) Later she became a notable political figure as Regent of the Netherlands. Unwilling to accept the orders sent by her brother, Philip II of Spain, through the notorious Duke of Alva, she withdrew to Parma.

<sup>3</sup> Capponi, after reading aloud a sermon of Savonarola's, had induced the people to elect Christ as their King. An inscription to this effect put up over the door of the Palazzo Vecchio was changed by Cosimo I. See p. 405 n.

<sup>4</sup> The one exception, it is said, was the Badia of S. Salvi (to the west), where Andrea del Sarto had lately painted his fine fresco of the Last Supper—still there. The soldiers sent to demolish the building were so overpowered by the picture that they left the refectory standing.



## FLORENCE (1500-1600)

Porta S. Niccolò. During ten months the city held out courageously, provisioned by the gallant Ferruccio, for from Empoli he made frequent raids through the lines of the besiegers, who under the command of the Prince of Orange attempted a complete investment. At last, after the Imperialists had captured Volterra, Prato, and other Tuscan cities, and the valiant efforts of Ferruccio had been foiled by the treasonable inertia of the Florentine garrison's commandant, Malatesta Baglioni, a fierce encounter took place at Gavinana, near Pracchia, in the Pistoian Apennines. Here both Ferruccio and the Prince of Orange were slain, and the field army of the Florentines was nearly annihilated. The city then surrendered.

### (4) DUKE ALESSANDRO

It was to the Emperor that Florence nominally surrendered, but Pope Clement seems to have decided the fate of the city. The Gonfaloniere Carducci and, some say, a thousand other Republican notabilities were put to death. A kind of papal vicar, Baccio Valori, was installed in the Palazzo Vecchio and surrounded by a bodyguard of Imperial troops. After about a year Alessandro arrived and took up residence in the Medici Palace. Ten months later (May 1, 1532) he summoned the Signoria to his palace and informed them that by the Emperor's orders the Republic was dissolved and that he had assumed the government as Duke of Florence.<sup>1</sup>

The five years during which this monster glutted uncontrolled his ravenous lusts, like a second Nero, are best passed over with a few words.<sup>2</sup> The death, in 1534, of Pope Clement, to whom he owed his dukedom—and probably his existence—seems to have made things even worse, dissipating what small

<sup>1</sup> What one usually calls the Palazzo Vecchio was really, until 1532, the Palazzo della Signoria (or de' Priori). The great bell (the Cow, *La Vacca*) which used to summon the citizens was taken down and broken up by Alessandro. Before he was publicly proclaimed Duke the great fortress of S. Giovanni Battista (now the Fortezza da Basso) was built, to be occupied by his German and Spanish bodyguard.

<sup>2</sup> 'His excesses were as uncontrolled by reason as those of a savage beast,' says the contemporary chronicler Varchi.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

regard for decency and public opinion he had hitherto displayed. In 1535 the very numerous Florentine exiles and fugitives (*fuorusciti*) in correspondence with the ever-increasing malcontents in the city determined to appeal to Charles V, and chose as their envoy that other illegitimate Medici claimant whom Pope Clement had set aside in favour of Alessandro—namely Ippolito, who was, as we have seen, probably the natural son of Giuliano, Duke of Nemours. The Emperor was at this time in Tunis, and Ippolito was waiting near Gaeta for a ship to take him across to Africa when he suddenly died—poisoned, as seems certain, by an agent of Alessandro.<sup>1</sup>

In the next year, 1536, after Florence had been visited by Charles V—who seems to have delighted to honour as a guest the palace of the tyrant—Alessandro married the daughter of the Emperor, now a child of 15; and about six months later (January 1537) he was assassinated by his relative Lorenzo (called Lorenzino or Lorenzaccio respectively by friendly contemporaries and later foes), who had been his boon-companion, ‘a reckless libertine, half scholar and half madman.’ The murder was probably committed by Lorenzino mainly in order to avenge insults offered to his sister Laodomia,<sup>2</sup> although in the *Apologia* that he published he asserted that his sole motive had been to free his country from an intolerable tyranny; and by most of his contemporaries he was extolled as a tyrannicide. He escaped to Venice, where Filippo Strozzi, living there in voluntary banishment, welcomed him as ‘the Florentine Brutus’—an expression that may elucidate Michelangelo’s unfinished *Brutus* in the Bargello. At Venice he was, in 1547, assassinated by *sicarii* sent thither by Duke Cosimo. Alessandro was buried in the sarcophagus wherein the body lay of Lorenzo II (so-called ‘Duke of Urbino’), beneath Michelangelo’s *Penseroso*—a fact proved by the opening of the tomb

<sup>1</sup> His character is praised as generous and refined. Much against his will he was made cardinal. Sent as envoy to Hungary (where he was when Alessandro was recognized by the Pope as the successor to the Medici princes) he became devoted to that country and people. See note to Fig. 53 (*b*). The prisoner was stoned to death by his own townspeople (at Borgo San Sepolcro).

<sup>2</sup> A fine portrait of her by Bronzino is in the Florentine Accademia.

## FLORENCE (1500-1600)

in 1875, when the mulatto type of the remains, and the wounds visible in the face, made recognition indubitable.

### (5) COSIMO I AND HIS SONS

The seven Grand Dukes of the younger branch of the Medici, descendants by the male line not of the old Cosimo *Pater Patriae* but of his brother,<sup>1</sup> ruled Florence (from the accession of Duke Cosimo in 1537 to the death of Giovanni Gastone in 1737) exactly two centuries. Of these princes we are concerned with only the first three, and what might easily fill a volume—so innumerable are the subjects of interest connected with these three despots—will have to be compressed into a few pages.

Duke Alessandro's assassination removed the last of the male descendants, legitimate and illegitimate, of Lorenzo il Magnifico, and as the Signoria had been abolished Florence was without government. A kind of Senate ('The Forty-eight') still existed as a useless survival, and the leading members, including Filippo Strozzi, the historian Guicciardini, and Baccio Valori, were discussing the re-establishment of the Republic when from his mother's *podere* in the Mugello the lad Cosimo, son of the late famous *condottiere* Giovanni delle Bande Nere, appeared on the scene. He was regarded as a modest, innocuous, sport-loving young fellow; and he made such a pleasant impression on the sage senators that they thought they could not do better than elect the youth—who, besides being now the only male representative of the younger Medici, was a great-grandson of Lorenzo il Magnifico—as the constitutional Supreme Magistrate, reserving to the Council all real power.<sup>2</sup> But within a few months this lad of 17 had

<sup>1</sup> Table VII, and see Index for Caterina Sforza and her son, Giovanni delle Bande Nere, whose wife, the gentle and long-suffering Maria Salviati, was granddaughter to Lorenzo the Magnificent. Thus Cosimo I claimed descent, through his mother, also from the elder branch. She disapproved strongly of his usurpation of absolute power, and was heartlessly ignored by him.

<sup>2</sup> On the pedestal of Gian da Bologna's equestrian statue of Cosimo is a bronze relief depicting this scene.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

established himself as absolute master of Florence, and many of the chief citizens—among them Filippo Strozzi and Baccio Valori—were fugitives and were zealously collecting an army. Aided by German troops, of which large numbers had been sent by Emperor Charles to support Alessandro, Cosimo succeeded in capturing at Montemurlo (near Prato) that part of the exiles' army in which Filippo Strozzi and most of the principal *fuorusciti* happened to be. This victory (commemorated by the Roman column, surmounted by a figure of Justice, in the Piazza della Trinità) was followed by hideous acts of vengeance. All the more important captives, members of many of the chief Florentine families, after being inhumanly tortured, were executed—most of them in the courtyard of the Bargello. Not one, it is said, was pardoned. Filippo Strozzi—the husband of Clarice de' Medici—was found stabbed to death in his cell in the Fortezza, which stronghold his money had enabled Alessandro to build.<sup>1</sup>

Cosimo now procured from Charles V the title of Duke, and proposed to marry his daughter Margaret, Alessandro's widow; but as this favour was refused he wedded Eleonora of Toledo, daughter of the Spanish Viceroy of Naples.<sup>2</sup> After the magnificent marriage ceremony in S. Lorenzo the bride was conducted not to the Medici Palace but to the Palazzo Vecchio, to which Cosimo had transferred his residence, as being more suitable for a despot's *castello*.<sup>3</sup>

The main facts of Cosimo's long reign of 37 years must be stated concisely. The first ten years were mostly spent in extending and consolidating his dominions, which he effected mainly by clever diplomacy, aiding Charles V by his immense wealth, and opposing French ambitions in regard to Italy,

<sup>1</sup> The Viale Filippo Strozzi now partly encircles the Fortezza, but will probably ere long bear the name of some up-to-date celebrity.

<sup>2</sup> The 'Spanish Chapel' (S. M. Novella) took its name from being used by the Spaniards on this occasion.

<sup>3</sup> From his Swiss, or Austrian, bodyguard (*Landsknechte*, mistakenly called *Lanzknechte*, or 'lancers') Orcagna's Loggia received the name *Loggia de' Lanzi*. In the Quartiere di Eleonora di Toledo in the Palazzo Vecchio exists a fine portrait of her, and a later and more elaborate but far less agreeable one in the Uffizi, both by Bronzino.





54. COSIMO I



(a) FRANCESCO I



(b) BIANCA CAPELLO

## FLORENCE (1500-1600)

and at the same time losing no opportunity of freeing himself from his nominal vassalage and from the presence of Imperial garrisons. In 1547 he succeeded in freeing himself also from his only possible Medicean rival, for two of his many paid assassins at last caught Lorenzino in some obscure Venetian *calle* and murdered him.

In 1553 Cosimo and Eleonora with their seven children left the Palazzo Vecchio and took up their residence in the great building which is still known as the 'Pitti,' but which, though originally begun by Luca Pitti, from Brunelleschi's design, was sold to Cosimo and has served as the Grand Ducal and royal palace for over three centuries and a half.<sup>1</sup>

In 1555 took place an event that has, no less than many other acts of ferocity, left an indelible stain on the memory of Cosimo—the conquest of Siena. This brave little republic, which, in spite of various local despots, and in spite of the Spanish-Austrians, had with the help of the French preserved many of its liberties, had been vainly attacked by Eleonora's father, the Viceroy of Naples, and Cosimo, with a view to his own interests, now assailed it with a large army of Swiss and German mercenaries combined with the Machiavellian militia of Florence, and defeated the Sienese under the command of Filippo Strozzi's gallant son, Piero. Then, after a siege of several months, Siena surrendered, but, we are told, not before 'out of 40,000 inhabitants only 6000 remained alive, and everything edible had been consumed' (Young).

In this year (1555) took place also the dramatic abdication of Charles V and his retirement to a Spanish monastery. He left Spain to his son Philip II, and the Imperial title to his brother Ferdinand. Cosimo, true to his policy, supported

<sup>1</sup> Even after Cosimo's large additions the building consisted of only a small part of the present colossal pile. To Cosimo are due the great western court, the Boboli Gardens, and the Belvedere Fort. He also merits gratitude for having collected many of the dissipated art treasures of the earlier Medici, for having patronized Bronzino, Allori, Vasari, Benvenuto Cellini, and Gian da Bologna (Jean Boulogne). He also began the collection of Etruscan antiquities and had the Uffizi built, and the *Passaggio* thence across the river to the Pitti Palace. See Fig. 6 and Note.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

these monarchs ; and he reaped a rich reward, for the Peace of Cateau-Cambr sis, which in 1559 ended the wars between France, Spain, and England, also left Philip undisputed master of North and South Italy, and Cosimo, his ally, the undisputed master of the sole powerful Italian state.<sup>1</sup>

In the autumn of 1562 Cosimo made a tour of inspection in the region of the Maremma, accompanied by his duchess and three of his sons. On reaching Livorno his son Giovanni (a young cardinal of 19 years) died of malarial fever, and Eleonora and another son, Garzia, at Pisa some weeks later.<sup>2</sup> Thus of the party of five only Cosimo and his youngest son, Ferdinand, a boy of 13, returned to Florence.

Duke Cosimo had possessed himself of a power more absolute than that of many a monarch, but a kingly title was a dream that he, like Gian Galeazzo Visconti and Caesar Borgia, was fain to realize. This supreme honour, at which he grasped, eluded him ; but he succeeded, after many years of crafty and persistent effort, in exchanging the title of Duke of Florence, granted him by Charles V, for that of Grand Duke of Tuscany. The dignity was conferred on him by Pius V, who crowned him at Rome, but the act, though recognized by England and France, was ignored by the Emperor (now Maximilian II), seeing that it was a violation of the Imperial prerogative. Moreover, Maximilian had another reason to be vexed. Some years previously he had given his sister, Johanna of Austria, to Francesco, Cosimo's eldest son, and this young man, being passionately in love with the fair Bianca Cappello (whose story has yet to be told), showed as little affection for his very plain bride as she showed respect for him and his fictitious Grand Ducal title.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Venice was still independent but sinking fast, engaged in a struggle for existence against the Turks. Savoy, long under French supremacy, though not yet powerful, was now an independent duchy, and a bulwark against French aggression.

<sup>2</sup> These facts, proved by State documents lately brought to light, dissipate entirely all the stories about fratricide and the slaying of the survivor by Cosimo himself.

<sup>3</sup> Johanna seems to have ultimately found the magnificence of her husband's court to her taste, in spite of Bianca, and to have ceased her lamentable



## FLORENCE (1500-1600)

During the last ten years of his life Cosimo left the government of Florence almost entirely in the hands of Francesco, and towards the end he withdrew from public life and lived at his villa near Castello, having married a second wife, Camilla Martelli, whom his sons refused to recognize, as she was the daughter of a Florentine of humble rank.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of much that makes one shrink in horror from the gloomy and ferocious tyrant who finally crushed the life out of the republican liberty of the Florentines, it must be allowed that Cosimo raised Florence, as mistress of Tuscany, to a height of material prosperity never before attained by the city. His efforts in extending its dominions and consolidating its military and naval power, in developing the resources and the trade of the country and in forwarding the interests of science and art, were ceaseless and eminently successful.<sup>2</sup> He also deserves respect for having freed himself to a large extent from vassalage to the Empire. Although under despotism, Tuscany had at least the good fortune to escape becoming, like Milan, a mere province of an alien Power. Not only had it become the leading Italian state, but in wealth and civilizing influences it was now one of the leading states of Europe.

Neither the regency nor the reign (1574-1587) of Francesco I offers much of historical importance. The story of Florence has become the biography of its despots, and the contemporary annalists devote much of their space to personal details—especially to crimes, real or imaginary, such as the tragedies connected with Vittoria Accoramboni. From such biographical material I can but select a few details.

letters home; whereupon her Imperial brother, totally ignoring the fictitious papal donation, granted to Francesco what he regarded as the genuine article.

<sup>1</sup> On succeeding to the throne Francesco imprisoned her for the rest of her life.

<sup>2</sup> He started Florentine tapestry, of which magnificent specimens are to be seen in the Galleria degli Arazzi. Pisa owed to Cosimo the draining of malarious marshes, the construction of docks, the re-establishment of the University, the founding of a great school and garden of botany, and the institution of the famous Naval Order of Cavalieri di S. Stefano against pirates and Turks. He began the development of Livorno, then a fishing village, into a great port.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

Francesco had not the ambitious and strenuous character of his father. He was inclined to intellectual studies, and especially devoted to chemistry and natural science.<sup>1</sup> His neglect of public affairs from the first days of his regency caused much disorganization, social and political. Crime became rampant, and, as was natural, conspiracies were rife; and the bloody vengeance that he took when in the very first year of his actual reign a formidable plot was discovered made him no less detested by many of the leading Florentine families than his father had made himself after the victory of Montemurlo.

With more than half the life of Francesco I, and with his death, is closely intertwined the story of Bianca Cappello. Although by no means above reproach, she has doubtless suffered too much from the general hatred felt for Francesco, and from the bitter hostility with which she was, perhaps naturally, regarded by Francesco's Austrian spouse as well as by his brother, Ferdinand. She was the daughter of an eminent Venetian noble, and was a typical Venetian beauty, with ruddy-golden hair and dignified, gracious presence. A foolish infatuation for a young bank-clerk, a Florentine resident in Venice, led to secret marriage and flight to Florence, where, after a time of great hardship, during which the life of her husband, Piero Buonaventura, was in constant peril from the emissaries of the enraged Venetian aristocracy, she happened to attract the notice of Francesco,<sup>2</sup> and, apparently with the connivance of the worthless Piero (who was ere long killed in a street brawl), she yielded to the suit of the young prince—and in spite of his unwilling marriage to the Austrian Archduchess retained his passionate devotion for 15 years, and

<sup>1</sup> His discovery how to imitate Oriental porcelain introduced the porcelain industry into Florence. His interest in art and literature aided the foundation of two very well known and very different institutions, namely the Uffizi Gallery and the Accademia della Crusca.

<sup>2</sup> The window at which he first saw her was on the south side of the Piazza S. Marco. The equestrian statue of Ferdinand, by Gian da Bologna, in the adjoining Piazza of the SS. Annunziata has nothing to do with Bianca, though many Florentines think that it represents Francesco looking up at the window.

## FLORENCE (1500-1600)

then, on Johanna's decease, became his wife, and 9 years later died a few hours after his death.<sup>1</sup>

Modern research seems to have proved that in this case, as in so many others, the suspicions aroused, and the elaborate stories spread abroad and repeated by annalists, are baseless. One widely believed story was that Ferdinand, simulating reconciliation, accepted an invitation to visit Florence (for he had settled at Rome), and accompanied Francesco and Bianca to the famous Medicean villa Poggio a Caiano, where he used the opportunity thus offered and poisoned them. Another story stated that Bianca prepared a poisoned tart for Ferdinand, and that when by mistake Francesco had partaken of it she ate of it also. The true explanation may be, as it is perhaps in the case of Henry of Luxemburg and in many other recorded cases of sudden or simultaneous death, a virulent form of malarial fever.

Ferdinand I was 38 when he began his reign of 22 years. He had been made cardinal when only 14, at the time that his mother and two brothers had died after the unfortunate Maremma expedition. Although cardinal he had never 'taken holy orders,' and he resigned the dignity when he became Grand Duke. During the 13 years of his brother's reign he had lived at Rome, where he seems to have shown his vigorous character not only in matters ecclesiastical, but also as a *conoscitore* and zealous collector of antiquities.<sup>2</sup> Of the precious ancient statues that he acquired and placed in the newly built Villa Medici (on the Pincio) most were transferred by him, or later Grand Dukes, to Florence, where some of the most famous, such as the *Venus de' Medici*, the *Apollino*, the *Knife-thrower*, and the *Niobe Group*, contribute no small share to the world-wide celebrity of the Uffizi Gallery, the 'Tribuna' of which was constructed for Ferdinand by the architect Buontalenti.

<sup>1</sup> She is said to have often asserted that 'hours, not days,' would divide them in death.

<sup>2</sup> The valuable collections in the Vatican and elsewhere in Rome made by Julius II, Leo X, and Clement VII had been barbarously sold and dissipated by the succeeding Popes—especially by Pius V. The present incomparable galleries of ancient sculpture are due mainly to the munificence of Clement XIV and Pius VI (1770-1790) and to Pius VII (1800-1823).

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

Ferdinand is said to have ruled with firmness and justice, and the general level of political and social morality seems to have risen considerably. Several important works of public utility were undertaken by him, of which the further development of Livorno (Leghorn) is especially noticeable because the population was largely increased, as Romulus is said to have increased that of ancient Rome, by making the place an asylum for refugees. Many Roman Catholics emigrated thither from Protestant countries, many Protestants and Jews from Spain, Flanders, and other countries exposed to the terrors of the Inquisition.<sup>1</sup>

A great architectural work—or rather a work of gorgeous architectural decoration—initiated by Ferdinand (in 1604) was the Grand Ducal Mausoleum (*Cappella de' Principi*) connected with S. Lorenzo in Florence. It contains the sarcophagi of six Medicean Grand Dukes—that of the last, Giovanni Gastone, being wanting—and the armorial bearings of sixteen Tuscan towns in exceedingly rich stone mosaic (*pietra dura* work), composed of lapis lazuli, jasper, chalcedony, and other precious materials.<sup>2</sup>

Besides his most valuable additions to the Uffizi Gallery Ferdinand forwarded the interests of art<sup>3</sup> by patronizing the gifted sculptor Jean Boulogne of Douai, generally known as Gian da Bologna or Giambologna. This artist, who for Francesco had produced his world-famous *Mercury*, made for Ferdinand the fine equestrian statue of Cosimo I which stands in the Piazza della Signoria, and the still finer one of Ferdinand himself (inspired evidently by that of Marcus Aurelius at Rome, and cast from the metal of captured Turkish cannons) which adorns the Piazza della SS. Annunziata.

<sup>1</sup> The inner 'Medicean harbour'—too shallow for large vessels—has since 1854 been supplemented by the outer port, which is only protected by a semicircular mole.

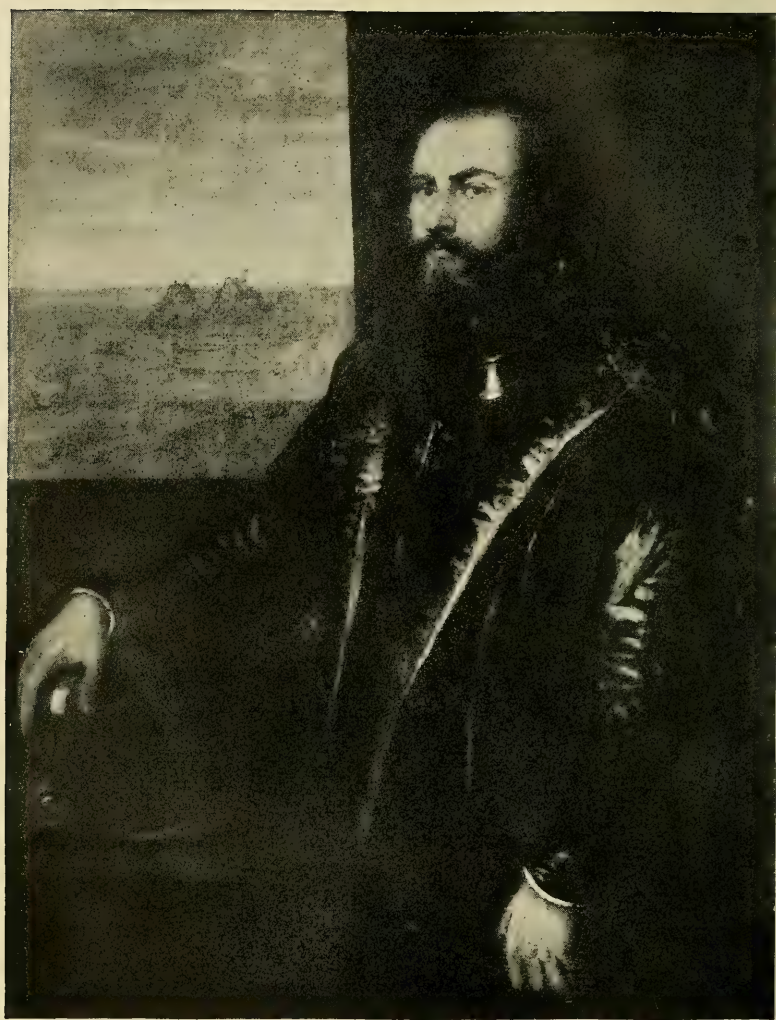
<sup>2</sup> Ferdinand founded the still existing manufactory of *pietra dura* (Florentine stone mosaic or *intarsio*).

<sup>3</sup> Florentine painting was now extinct. The Flemish Sustermans began his fine realistic portrait-painting in the reign of Ferdinand's son, Cosimo II.





56. FERDINAND I



57. SEBASTIANO VENIER

## CHAPTER IV

### VENICE (1500-1600)

THE external history of Venice during the Cinquecento falls, as we have seen from the sketch already given, into three periods: first, the eight years preceding the League of Cambrai; second, a period of about twenty years, during which by valiant fighting and by clever, and sometimes ignoble, diplomacy the Venetian state strove with less and less success to hold its own against this League of overwhelmingly numerous enemies; third, the remaining seventy years, during which the political importance of Venice as an Italian state sank towards its setting, while her heroic resistance, as a maritime and colonial Power, to the ever more threatening advance of the Turks shed a glory upon her declining fortunes.

In the present chapter, after touching on the first two periods, I shall limit myself to certain events connected with these wars against the Turks; for the internal history of the Republic during this century affords little in the way of interesting personalities<sup>1</sup> or dramatic episodes, and as the Venetian constitution had become so purely mechanical that what changes took place were not developments that deserve study, but simply devices for the better working of the machine, a few words about the notorious Council of the Ten, which for centuries was the main agency of the Venetian state, will suffice. There is, as all know, a subject that lends to the story of Venice during this century an irresistible attraction—

<sup>1</sup> After Loredano and Ant. Grimani (*d.* 1523) we have a series of commonplace Doges, until the reign of Seb. Venier, to whose courage when admiral the victory of Lepanto (1571) had been due. See List, p. 593.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

the subject of Venetian art. This I must treat as fully as my limited space permits in a subsequent chapter. I shall therefore here merely touch upon it with a few words.

### (1) 1500-1530

First then, as regards the short period that preceded and the wearisome wars that followed the League of Cambrai, it will perhaps be remembered that towards the end of the Quattrocento Venice had joined the Milanese duke, Lodovico il Moro, and other allies, in first inviting and then expelling<sup>1</sup> the French king, Charles VIII, and that it then rather meanly abandoned the Milanese alliance and favoured the claims of Louis XII, thus playing the traitor to Italy and gaining as a reward for its perfidy not only the temporary possession of several Milanese cities,<sup>2</sup> but also the bitter hostility of many powerful adversaries, whom contempt and jealousy combined into a League, the professed object of which was 'to quench as a general conflagration the insatiable greed of the Venetians.'

The general and intense hatred excited by Venice was due to its overbearing arrogance, its duplicity, and the vast extent of its possessions—for in spite of very serious colonial losses it was probably at the end of the Quattrocento, after the enslavement of Milan, the most powerful of the Italian states, and apparently secured against foreign conquest by its natural defences. On the mainland its territories reached, and for a time even went beyond, the Adda (Lago di Como), and were bounded on the north by the Alps, so that it really seemed as if there were a possibility of Northern and Central Italy, if not the whole of the peninsula, being finally united under the Lion of St. Mark; and its oversea dominions still included

<sup>1</sup> The excitability and instability of the Venetians is well illustrated by a letter quoted by the soldier annalist Malipiero in which it is described how at the news of the victory (?) of Fornovo 'people were seen kissing each other in the streets and boys running about with flags and shouting for joy.'

<sup>2</sup> The Venetians entered Cremona when the French entered Milan. Lodovico, it will be remembered, fled to Germany in 1499, returned to Milan and was captured (betrayed by the Swiss mercenaries) and taken to France in 1500.



## VENICE (1500-1600)

Cyprus and Crete and many other islands, and important sea-ports in the Morea, and much of the Dalmatian and Istrian coasts.

Towards the end of 1508, in the French town of Cambrai—near which not long ago was being decided the future of humanity—envoys of five great European Powers, and of several smaller Italian states, met to decide the future of Venice, the ‘insatiable greed’ of which they were determined to extinguish utterly. King Louis XII was represented by Cardinal d’Amboise; the Emperor Maximilian I by Margaret of Austria; Pope Julius II by his nuncio; Ferdinand the Catholic of Spain, Naples, and Sicily by his plenipotentiary; the King of Hungary, the Duke of Savoy, the Marquis of Mantua (Francesco Gonzaga), and the Duke of Ferrara (Alfonso I) by their agents. The domains of Venice were to be apportioned thus: the Pope was to recover the whole of Romagna and to gain Ravenna, Rimini, Faenza, and Cervia; the Emperor was given Padua, Verona, Vicenza, the Friuli, Istria, etc.; France was to have Bergamo, Brescia, and Cremona, besides all the Milanese territory; Hungary was to appropriate Dalmatia; Spain and Naples were to be assigned Otranto, Brindisi, Gallipoli and other cities belonging to the oversea empire of the Venetians; Savoy was to possess Cyprus, and Mantua and Ferrara were to receive additions to their territories. The Pope undertook to open the campaign by laying Venice under Interdict—an act that the Council of the Ten answered by forbidding the publication of the papal bull, and by managing to affix to the door of St. Peter’s in Rome an appeal to a general Council.

As soon as this spiritual thunderbolt had been launched the French forces under Trivulzio (the same who had driven Lodovico il Moro from Milan in 1499) made an impetuous advance from Milan and, having crossed the Adda in spite of the advice of their veteran general, inflicted a crushing defeat on the Venetians at Agnadello; then pressing forward they soon overran all *terra ferma* Venetia, making themselves masters of Cremona, Brescia, Bergamo, Peschiera, and other towns, and commanding Verona, Vicenza, and Padua to send

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

their city-keys to Emperor Maximilian. Venice herself would have probably shared the fate of Milan and have fallen under foreign domination had not the lagunes once more, as so often before, saved her. Great was the panic. Doge Leonardo Loredan in an impassioned speech implored the citizens to sacrifice in defence of the Republic some of that immense wealth which they spent so lavishly on festal pageants ; <sup>1</sup> but there was little or no response, and he himself was reproached for having failed to act up to his own appeal. Indeed, so ignoble a spirit seems to have prevailed that the Venetian Government, it is said, in their terror actually offered to restore all the territory claimed by Pope Julius, and to hold their mainland domains as fiefs of the Emperor.

But Emperor Maximilian did not back up his impetuous French allies. He acted, as he was wont, very slothfully, and when at last he appeared before Padua to exact its submission the Paduans offered brave resistance. Then the Venetians began to pluck up courage, and, taking advantage of the fact that Spain and the Pope were beginning to be jealous of the brilliant success of the French, they made overtures, which ended in their receiving the papal absolution—in gratitude for which Venice bade her envoys prostrate themselves before the Pontiff in the portal of St. Peter's. Thereupon Julius formed his 'Holy League' (joined also by England) and set to work in co-operation with Venice to expel those French 'barbarians' whom he had so lately incited to attack Italy. In former chapters it has been related how, under the command of the youthful Gaston de Foix, the French at first swept all before them ; how, when hemmed in by the forces of the League under the walls and among the marshes of Ravenna, they won the day but lost their commander ; and how they retreated—bearing among their captives that Giovanni de' Medici who soon after became Pope Leo X—

<sup>1</sup> Even at this moment, when the French were threatening Venice itself, the Carnival was kept (says the contemporary annalist Priuli) with as much gaiety as in the most flourishing days of the Republic. Curiously enough, we hear of envoys of Spain and the Pope present at Venetian festivities—as if no war were going on. Perhaps overtures had already begun.

## VENICE (1500-1600)

and were ere long driven from the whole of North Italy (1512). Thus by good luck and clever diplomacy Venice had so far managed to hold her own fairly well against the very formidable League of Cambrai.

On the first day of 1515 Louis XII died, and was succeeded by Francis I, who at once decided to enforce his claim as Duke of Milan. Venice, suspicious of the growing power and the ever greater demands of her allies (the Pope claiming cities such as Parma and Piacenza, and the Emperor failing to restore Verona and Vicenza), once more plays false and favours the French invader. By September the army of Francis was about ten miles from Milan. Here, at Marignano (now Melegnano), it was encountered by the Swiss mercenaries of Maximilian Sforza, the puppet-Duke.<sup>1</sup> 'The fight,' says Manfroni, 'was most ferocious; the combatants fell in thousands; at nightfall this battle of giants (as the French general Trivulzio named it) was not decided; after a short pause it was renewed at daybreak. Then appeared the vanguard of the Venetians, and the Swiss were forced to retreat, and shortly afterwards Milan and its Castello surrendered.' This victory of Marignano made the French for the time practically masters of the situation; Pope Leo came to terms with Francis I; the new King of Spain, Charles—four years afterwards the Emperor Charles V—was as yet too young and unprepared to face his great rival, whom he was destined to capture later at Pavia; the old and vacillating Emperor Maximilian accepted a bribe from the Venetians and abandoned all claims to towns of Venetian Lombardy; and thus Venice found herself once more in possession of almost all the territory that she had for a time lost, and in this respect had regained the position that she had held before the League of Cambrai.

But her political prestige and influence as an Italian state were almost at an end. In the long struggle between the Emperor Charles V and Francis I, briefly interrupted by the catastrophe of Pavia in 1525, and terminated by the triumphant establishment of Spanish-Austrian supremacy and the corona-

<sup>1</sup> Set up by Pope Julius II and the Emperor in 1512. See p. 437.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

tion of Charles as *Imperator Romanorum* at Bologna in 1530, Venice only took part by affording loans—more or less on compulsion—to Charles, and in the various attempts to settle the general affairs of Italy which were made after the battle of Pavia (1525), and the sack of Rome (1527), and the Council of Bologna (1530), Venice was ignored. This was doubtless partly due to the fact that she was becoming more and more occupied by her endeavours to ward off from herself, and from Italy, the Turkish peril; but we are forced to admit that her isolation seems to have resulted not so much perhaps any longer from jealousy and hatred caused by her ambition and arrogance as from the mistrust and suspicion aroused by the duplicity and craft and secrecy that characterized her dealings with other states, and the mystery and gloom that often enshrouded the workings of her internal government.

In connexion with her internal government a few remarks on the subject of the notorious Council of the Ten will here be in place. The process by which the originally democratic Venetian constitution was transformed into a close oligarchy with characteristics of the worst type of despotism has been sketched in a former volume (*Medieval Italy*) and in previous chapters of this book.<sup>1</sup> It may be remembered that at first the Doge was elected by the General Assembly of the whole people (the *Arengo*). He wielded powers greater than those of many a constitutional monarch, being guided rather than controlled by two *Consiglieri ducali*, to which number he could add by calling in other advisers—called *I Pregadi*, 'The Invited.' This Council was gradually increased and became permanent—for the tendency was to reduce the Doge himself to a mere decorative figure-head. But at the same time the people were gradually ousted from their rights by decreasing, or limiting to a certain class, their assemblies—by creating smaller Councils, or Committees, with important elective and

<sup>1</sup> It must be allowed that there was a combination of elements in the oligarchic republic of Venice (as in ancient Sparta) that by defending it against both popular and tyrannic influences preserved it from the fate that has generally overtaken all democracies. But the Venetians—except in early days—never knew the delights and the dignity of self-government.



## VENICE (1500-1600)

executive powers. Thus the *Maggior Consiglio* of 480 members, appointed in 1172, takes the place of the people's *Arengo*, and it in turn appoints eleven electors to nominate the Doge.<sup>1</sup> Then, in 1297, the famous *Serrata* (Closure) of the *Maggior Consiglio* limits membership to those who had for four years sat in the Council, or whose ancestors had belonged to it, and thus disfranchises and renders ineligible for office the great majority of the inhabitants of the city.

The next step was the election (in 1310) of ten Commissioners to investigate the origin and counteract the effects of the conspiracy of Tiepolo. The powers of this Council of Ten were renewed again and again, and in 1335 it was made permanent and acquired almost unlimited powers as the detective and judicial agency of the state, competent to cite, or easily able to procure permission to cite, before its tribunal any suspect—even the Doge himself. It is true that its election and its proceedings were regulated by certain formalities, but it was practically irresponsible for its actions, which might include the most ghastly forms of torture and of capital punishment. The court of judgment consisted of not only the Ten, but the Doge and his Councillors. The Doge sat in the panelled recess of the (still extant) *Sala del Consiglio dei Dieci*. His Councillors were robed in crimson, the three *Capi* of the Ten in violet, the others in black.

'With the *Serrata* and the creation of the Ten,' says Mr. Brown admiringly, 'Venice reached her full constitutional maturity'; and he seems to regret that 'the constitutional history of Venice during the last two centuries and a half of her existence is the history of . . . reaction against the authority of the Ten.' One may however remark that the continuance of that budding process, so to speak, by which the Venetian constitution so often evolved from its Councils smaller but still

<sup>1</sup> The new-elected Doges continued to be presented to the people with the empty formula: 'This is your Doge, if it so please you.' Mr. Horatio Brown, who in his interesting *Historical Sketch* of Venice displays perhaps excessive admiration for the Venetian constitution, says that the right of election was thus lost by the people, but 'the ghost of it still remained to trouble the state for more than a hundred years.'

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

more potent Councils seems to prove that by the Cinquecento it had not reached full maturity. Thus, in 1529 the Ten, which almost unopposed and uncontrolled had for nigh two centuries managed the most important and secret affairs of the state both in peace and war—all the subtle diplomacy connected with the wars against Genoa, the Turks, the Carrara, the Milanese, and the League of Cambrai, as well as all the difficulties connected with such cases as those of Marino Faliero, the Foscari, and Carmagnola—developed a kind of expert Committee, called a *Giunta* ('Addition'), for dealing with special cases; and, as usual, this additional body became permanent. In 1537 another such Committee was created—*contro la bestemmia* ('against blasphemy')—a body that undertook to terrorize vice of every kind; and, lastly, the notorious Three Inquisitors were instituted. To this Inquisition the Ten delegated all their almost unlimited powers to deal with cases of treason; and the horror that we feel at the mere name of these merciless and mysterious political Inquisitors—the sleuth-hounds of the Ten—is probably justifiable, for after the establishment of Spanish-Austrian supremacy in Italy (say, after the coronation of Charles V at Bologna as *Imperator Romanorum*, in 1530) Venice for a long period, though at times she accepted Spanish aid, existed in a state of hysterical dread of Spanish treachery, Spanish spies, and Spanish gold, while her struggle for existence against the Turks, and later her furious quarrel with the Borghese Pope, Paul V, naturally made her more sensitive to the perils of treason among her own citizens.

### (2) THE TURKISH WARS

When the Council of Bologna, in 1530, decided the fate of Italy for many years to come, leaving her in helpless subjection to the now dominant power of the Spanish-Austrian Empire, Venice, after paying a great indemnity, retained her mainland Italian territories such almost as they had been before the League of Cambrai had been formed in order to annihilate her. But from 1530 onwards, like other Italian states, she almost

## VENICE (1500-1600)

ceased to possess any political importance in Italy. Nevertheless she was in a very much more enviable position than Milan, than Genoa, than Florence, than Naples, or than Rome. Although her form of government possessed, as I have said, many of the evils of the worst type of despotism, she was nominally a free Italian republic, and at this date she was still, in spite of serious losses, a great sea-Power and the mother-city of many colonies, including Corfu, Cefalonia, Zante, Negropont, Crete, Cyprus, many other islands, and parts of the Morea. A disastrous naval battle fought in 1499 off Sapienza (an island not far from Lepanto) had led to a humiliating compact with the Sultan Bajazet II, to whom much of the Morea was ceded. A nominal peace had then existed for about twenty years, while Leonardo Loredan and Antonio Grimani reigned; but in 1522 Sultan Suleiman took Rhodes, and Turkish pirates infested the Levant; thus constant friction was kept up. In 1537 the insults and aggressions of the Turks forced Venice, much against her will, to accept the challenge, and, being very miserably supported by her nominal allies, the Farnese Pope, Paul III, and the Emperor Charles, she once more had to sign a ruinous treaty with the infidel, and again had to cede some of her colonies.

In 1566 Suleiman was succeeded by Selim, named 'the Drunkard.' The new Sultan set his heart on the conquest of Cyprus. In 1570 he sent an envoy to Venice to claim the island—on the ground that it was an appanage of the city of Mecca! This impudent demand, which should have evoked the indignation of all Christendom,<sup>1</sup> won for Venice magniloquent and worthless promises from the Papacy and the Emperor (now Maximilian II), but no material aid except 50 galleys sent by Philip II of Spain—and sent so late that while the Venetian fleet waited for them at Zara and at Corfu the Turks were able to land on Cyprus; and when at last Candia (Crete) was reached violent dissensions arose among the admirals as to the plan of action and as to precedence,

<sup>1</sup> How Cyprus passed from the 'Kings of Jerusalem' and Caterina Cornaro to Venice is related p. 358 *sq.*

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

and finally the Spanish ships under their admiral, Andrea Doria, sailed off homewards.

Meanwhile the Turks continued to land troops on Cyprus and completely isolated the cities of Nicosia and Famagosta. In Nicosia there was collected an army of some 50,000 men, about a tenth of whom were regular troops. The Turks had powerful artillery, and ere long large breaches were made in the city walls. As there seemed no hope of succour from the Venetian fleet a part of the garrison, under Cesare Piovine, made a desperate sortie. They surprised the Turkish camp and spiked numerous guns, but the governor of Nicosia, a degenerate Dandolo, had not the courage to follow up the success ; the gallant band was driven back ; the Turks, following them up, burst into the town ; all the Italians were massacred or enslaved, and Dandolo's head was sent to Famagosta—a bloody monition of the still more horrible fate that was in reserve for Bragadino, the commandant of that city.

Famagosta was far less strongly garrisoned ; only about 7500 men and a few cannon were at the disposal of Bragadino. But he had been promised help, and bravely defied his 50,000 assailants. Help, however, was not forthcoming. While month after month Venice bargained for a return of the Spanish vessels, and while the Venetian fleet lay idly, if not timorously, at Messina, the Turkish artillery was battering the walls of the loyal Cyprian town. Breaches having been opened, the ferocious hordes of the Orientals made assault in overwhelming numbers. The Venetian garrison was heroically seconded in its desperate resistance by the whole population ; but their losses were terrible, and ammunition was nearly at an end when, on August 2, 1571, Bragadino surrendered.

Generous terms had been proposed by the Turks, and relying thereon Bragadino had gone forth to the enemy's camp in order to hand over the city keys to the Turkish commandant, Mustafa. At first the audience was of a most courteous character ; but, on the pretext of some small difference of opinion, Mustafa seized the Venetian commander and other



## VENICE (1500-1600)

men of distinction. Some were slain on the spot, others were hanged; Bragadino himself was tortured and mutilated, and finally in the main piazza of the devastated town he was flayed alive. His savage murderers then stuffed his skin, and after having carried the ghastly trophy exultingly through the streets of Famagosta suspended it to the yard-arm of a Turkish galley, which bore the prize to Constantinople.<sup>1</sup> During all these incidents the Venetian fleet, which together with allied contingents numbered no less than 250 vessels, made no attempt at succour.

But at last the courage and indignation of a Venetian admiral, Sebastiano Venier, a splendid survival of the old Venetian race of sea-dogs—whose bronzed and weather-beaten features are well known from Tintoretto's fine portrait<sup>2</sup>—put an end to this disgraceful state of things. In the autumn of 1571 the fleet left Messina for Corfu, and yielding to Venier's urgent insistence the admirals decided on attacking (October 7, 1571) the Turkish naval forces which were collected in the Bay of Lepanto. The action ended in a complete victory for the Christians. More than a hundred Turkish war-galleys were captured, and the losses of the Turks amounted to 30,000 men.

At Venice the news of the victory of Lepanto roused such enthusiasm that probably Sebastiano Venier would have received permission to make a dash for Constantinople itself; but once more the Spaniard, either from treachery, jealousy, or cowardice, refused to co-operate, and on an order sent by King Philip the Spanish contingent went into winter quarters.<sup>3</sup> Six months later the Turks had a fleet of over 200 vessels to replace those lost at Lepanto, and so overawed were the Venetians that they once more signed a by no means advantageous compact. This treaty, although it vouchsafed a nominal peace for the next 70 years or so, kept Venice in a

<sup>1</sup> The skin is said to be in the urn of Bragadino's monument in SS. Giovanni e Paolo at Venice. The picture by Bissolo indicates his horrible death.

<sup>2</sup> See Fig. 57 and Notes to Illustrations.

<sup>3</sup> One should remember that Philip was still much exercised by the revolt of the Netherlands and the ejection of the Moors from Spain.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

perpetual state of suppressed indignation at ever-recurring insults, until towards the middle of the 17th century the insufferable state of things ended in the war of Candia, and the last great Venetian colony, after a brave defence of 25 years, passed into the power of the Turks (September 29, 1669).

### (3) VENETIAN CINQUECENTO ARTISTS

The character of Venetian painting and architecture during this period will be noted in the chapter on Cinquecento Art. Here I need merely point out very briefly how the lives of the principal Venetian painters and architects fit in with events already related.

Towards the end of the Quattrocento, when Venice was passing the zenith of her greatness as an Italian state and as a maritime and colonial Power—at the period during which Italy was invaded by Charles VIII and by Louis XII, and Lodovico of Milan was dethroned and sent a prisoner to France, and the Turks inflicted a disastrous defeat on Venice at Sapienza—there were painting at Venice and Murano the two younger Vivarini and the two brothers Bellini (whose father, Jacopo, had died about 1470, shortly before the introduction of oil-painting by Antonello da Messina). Gentile Bellini died ere the League of Cambrai drew Venice into a struggle for existence, but Giovanni lived to see her successful, and survived the battles of Ravenna and Marignano. Cima da Conegliano and Carpaccio (*d.* after 1519) produced much of their best work during these same stirring but not very glorious times, when the League of Cambrai was being replaced by the Holy League, and Venice was helping the Pope and the Spaniards to eject the French from Italy, and then helping the French to retake Milan.

At the beginning of the century Giorgione and Tiziano were both young men of about 23 years of age. Giorgione was destined to live only 10 years longer, Tiziano 76—surviving by 5 years the battle of Lepanto. Palma Vecchio, some 3 years younger than Tiziano, died in 1528, nearly 50 years

## VENICE (1500-1600)

before him, just after the sack of Rome and just before the siege of Florence. Tintoretto, born in 1518, was engaged on his vast *Paradiso*, his Scuola di San Rocco frescos and all his other mighty works, during the half-century in which Venice carried on her desperate conflict with the Turks, and lost Cyprus and many other of her oversea possessions. Twenty years before he died (in 1594) the Turks had recovered from the defeat of Lepanto and had forced on Venice an ignoble peace. Paolo Veronese, 10 years younger than Tintoretto, died 6 years before him. Palma Giovane (1544-1628), some 15 years younger again, survived the first quarter of the 17th century, a period in which the glory of Venice was sinking beneath the horizon amidst a blaze of colour.

As for architecture—near the beginning of the century we have the younger Bart. Buon (of Bergamo), who designed the fine early Renaissance façade of the Scuola di San Rocco, and Pietro Lombardo (one of the celebrated 'Lombardi'), who continued the splendid Court of the Doges' Palace (begun by Rizzo c. 1484) and, with Bart. Buon, built the Procuratie Vecchie on the north side of the great Piazza (finished in 1517). These buildings were being erected during the period in which took place the invasions of Charles VIII and Louis XII, the fall of Milan, the League of Cambrai, and the battles of Ravenna and of Marignano.

Then we have the era of Jacopo Sansovino (Tatti, a Florentine), who built the beautiful and imposing Libreria Vecchia, opposite the Doges' Palace (1536-1553), and the Zecca, and the Loggetta of the Campanile (destroyed by the collapse of 1902, but rebuilt), and several fine palaces. Sansovino's buildings were erected during the most intense period of those Turkish wars which ended in the loss of Cyprus. He died (1570) just before this disaster and the transient success gained at Lepanto. His long life was nearly contemporary with that of Tiziano.

Then we have the era of Palladio (of Vicenza), who gave his name to a famous style of late Renaissance architecture. The two chief Venetian buildings designed by him are S.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

Giorgio Maggiore and Il Redentore, begun respectively in 1565 and 1577. Palladio was born in the same year as Tintoretto (1518), and his two great artistic Venetian contemporaries were this 'thunderbolt of painting' and Paolo Veronese. He flourished during the disastrous Turkish war, and lived to see Venice consoling herself by pageants and luxurious living amidst the humiliations caused by the ignoble peace of 1573. The follower of Palladio, Vincenzo Scamozzi, who lived till 1616, built the vast arcaded Procuratie Nuove which flank the Piazza on the south side, adjoining the Libreria Vecchia of Sansovino, which they out-rival in size, but to which in beauty of proportion they are very inferior.

As regards sculptors—the one really great Venetian name during this period is that of Sansovino, whose sculptures, mainly architectural, are comparable in technique with those of Michelangelo himself, but are imaginatively on a very much lower level. Among his best works are the bronze statues of Roman deities which adorned the Loggetta. These fortunately escaped destruction when the Campanile fell in 1902.



## CHAPTER V

### ART (1500-1600)

(See *List of Artists*, p. 605)

#### PAINTING

IN former chapters a good deal has been said about some of the chief Cinquecento artists in connexion with historical events and personages. I shall now, after a few general remarks, point out briefly the characteristics of the various schools and of the more important painters and give in three cases fairly full details, biographical and other.

The first half of the Cinquecento was the period of what is usually called the High Renaissance, after which, about 1550, took place (except at Venice) a general Decline. During this Decline the 'Titanic' genius of Michelangelo—who survived till 1564—seems to have paralysed all originality. Then, towards the end of the century, there was a revival, during which the so-called Naturalists and Eclectics, and later the Spanish-Italian school (at Naples and Rome), produced a vast number of works, among which many are distinguished, if not by great imagination and revealing power, at least by wonderful technical proficiency and undeniable beauty.

The difference between the art of the 'Earlier' and that of the 'High' Renaissance is very much more easily noticed in the works of the two periods than it is analysed and described. One obvious difference is, of course, the unabashed paganism of the Cinquecento in many of its so-called religious pictures and sculptures. But the wholesale adoption of what was believed to be the classical standpoint—for we may call it this rather than an assimilation of the classical spirit—although

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

it distinguishes the High Renaissance from earlier phases of art-revival in Italy, is by no means its only or its most important characteristic. The mere names of 'pre-Raphaelites,' such as Botticelli, Mantegna, and the Bellini, and those of Raphael, Michelangelo, and Tiziano, make us at once conscious of the fact that, besides this characteristic paganism, there is some very important difference between the paintings of these two groups of artists; and we find ourselves asking in what this difference consists.

We have in a former chapter seen how the old conventional, medieval, religious art began, towards the middle of the Quattrocento, to be replaced by an art which not only possessed a new technique—gained by zealous study of anatomy, perspective, chiaroscuro, etc., and by the use of the new oil-medium—but also undertook new subjects (classical, allegorical, *genre*, historical) and not infrequently used the old 'sacred subject' apparently for the sole purpose of introducing portraits, costumes, well-known events, scenes, or buildings. Moreover, many of the later Quattrocento painters show a delight in natural objects such as plants and flowers, and in depicting all manner of details with loving accuracy.

Now in these pre-Raphaelites—these Italian painters of the Early and Middle Renaissance—as Mr. Symonds says, it is the aim rather than the achievement that arouses our admiration, whereas in the early Cinquecentisti 'the hand has become so obedient to the brain' that nothing further is left to be desired in expression.<sup>1</sup> This 'facile mastery,' with its contempt for the more timid and more reverent attempts of earlier artists to reveal their visions, and for their loving delight in reproducing the minute details of natural objects, is a striking characteristic of High Renaissance painting.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *La mano che ubbedisce all' intelletto*, an expression used by Michelangelo that well describes the 'facile mastery' of the Cinquecentisti (what Vasari in his third *Proemio* calls *la gagliardezza e bravezza del disegno*), offers a very suggestive contrast to Dante's lament that in his age 'form very often accords not with the intention of art,' and that Nature herself 'works like the artist, who has the habit of art but a hand that trembles' (*Par.* i, 127; xiii, 77).

<sup>2</sup> This contempt is exemplified by Michelangelo's description of Perugino as a *goffo*—a blundering fool.

## ART (1500-1600)

Another characteristic is what perhaps we may call pure aestheticism—the use of beauty and grandeur (and also the terrible) merely for the sensations that they excite. Thus means have now become ends in themselves.

Still another characteristic, and perhaps the most distinctive, is the wondrous art shown by the greatest painters of the early Cinquecento in so presenting persons and their surroundings that they no longer, as in almost all earlier Italian paintings, seem to be grouped and arranged for the occasion,<sup>1</sup> but have such relation to the scene in which they move and have their being, and to the other persons depicted, that, in the highest sense, art conceals art, and the impression made is that of something real—produced by nature, or anyhow by ‘an art that nature makes,’ if we may thus apply Shakespeare’s words.

The new departure was really begun, as early as about 1425, by Masaccio; but his great style, displayed in the Brancacci Chapel frescos, exercised no wide influence until it was assimilated by Fra Bartolomeo, Michelangelo, and Raphael; and although Vasari justly says that Masaccio was ‘the first to give figures beautiful attitudes, natural movement, an expression of real life, and a relief [presentment] similar to reality,’ it is Leonardo da Vinci that he rightly selects as the founder of what he calls the ‘third’ or ‘modern’ style. Leonardo, born some 30 years before Raphael, was chronologically as much of a Quattrocentista as was Ghirlandaio, Francia, or Cima, but he possessed in a high degree the characteristics of the High Renaissance artists which we have noted—the ‘mastery and boldness,’ as Vasari calls it, in design, the power to use both beauty and ugliness in order to excite emotions, and the new art of presentment—finely

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the only exceptions to this among the earlier painters are Masaccio and, later, Signorelli. It certainly holds with Fra Angelico, Botticelli, Mantegna, the Bellini, Perugino. The theatrical procession of the Magi by Benozzo Gozzoli (Fig. 28) and his S. Agostino frescos at S. Gimignano are striking examples. The contrast between the earlier, side-wall frescos in the Sistine Chapel with those of Raphael’s *Stanze* well enforces what I have said.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

exemplified by that fragment of his *Battle of the Standard* preserved for us by Rubens.

But Leonardo, as Raphael and as Michelangelo, possessed that wondrous poetic power which not only acquires facile mastery, but uses it for the true ends of art. Not only could he design with *gagliardezza e bravezza* and with *grazia divina*, as Vasari notes, but the possession of this mastery, so far from causing him to despise the reverent and loving reproduction of detail by earlier masters, allowed him to spend a vast amount of energy in most minute and exact delineation of such natural objects as plants, flowers, and even lichens, and to declare that the direct study of nature, from its grandest effects to its smallest details, is the one true foundation of all artistic excellence.

Works of overwhelming power—of what has been called *terribilità*—were produced by Michelangelo. His was a great formative, plastic genius; and this is seen not only in his sculptures and his architecture, but in his painting, and, one might say, also in his poetry. As a painter, although he denied his right to this name,<sup>1</sup> he, like Leonardo, most assuredly possessed in the highest degree the facile mastery and other characteristics of the great Cinquecentisti, as is proved by his first great picture no less than by his last.<sup>2</sup> His true value, however, as a painter consists in the fact that in one work at least—the roof-frescos of the Sistine Chapel—he has shown rare poetic feeling and the ability to intimate with splendid mastery his visions of the ideal world. These wondrous scenes of the Creation, of the Fall, of the Deluge, etc., surrounded by majestic figures of Prophets and Sibyls, offer a striking contrast to his much later work, the *Last Judgment* (on the end wall of the Chapel)—one of the largest, certainly the most powerful,

<sup>1</sup> In a sonnet to Vittoria Colonna he speaks of his *turpissime pitture*, and he often told Pope Julius that he was 'no painter,' as he also asserts in a sonnet to Giov. di Pistoia, written while painting his Sistine Chapel frescos.

<sup>2</sup> The cartoon of *Soldiers surprised while bathing* (known only by a fragmentary copy) and the *Last Judgment*, in both of which he shows his infinite superiority to Signorelli and all other such predecessors.



## A R T (1500-1600)

and perhaps the most repellent picture in the world <sup>1</sup>—and make us realize from what a height into what abyss that 'Michelangelism' fell which exercised its mighty, misleading influence even on Raphael himself, and produced by the design, if not the hand, of a pupil of Raphael's (namely Giulio Romano) the monstrous frescos of the *Sala dei Giganti* in the Mantuan Palazzo del Te.

Raphael, said Michelangelo, owed less to nature than to study. He doubtless meant that Raphael owed less to his originality than to his gift of assimilation—which was something marvellous; but the dictum would also contain some truth if it meant that Raphael studied the works of nature less than those of art—thus failing to fulfil the condition laid down by Leonardo da Vinci, and bringing on himself in our age the reproach of insincerity and artificiality.

To discuss this question theoretically would involve the affirmation of axioms and the assumption of postulates on the nature and end of art which would lead us too far afield. I shall therefore allow myself to dismiss theory and to note the fact that the profound and sincere love and admiration which many feel for the pre-Raphaelite Quattrocentisti is sometimes accompanied by an opinion, founded mainly on a theoretical basis, that Raphael's art is such as Ruskin believed it to be, namely, insincere and artificial; but it is, I think, also a fact that a familiarity with Raphael's greatest works not seldom has the result that this opinion becomes overborne and finally swept away by the irresistible conviction that we have in such art as that of the *Stanze* frescos, the *Madonna di San Sisto*, and the Tapestry Cartoons—to leave much else aside for the moment—some of the very highest products of the creative genius of man; and without attempting to offer reasons for this change of opinion I surmise that it may be a fact that the greatest artistic genius does not necessarily invent new modes of presentment, but that it may assimilate and use old methods, and thus attain the highest object of art.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The masses of human nakedness and the wingless angels are right logically; but logic has few rights in the intimation of the supernatural.

<sup>2</sup> To make use of earlier methods and to assimilate earlier ideas is, of

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

After the death of Raphael, in 1520, at the early age of 37, the Roman school of painting, which he had founded, rapidly degenerated under the influence of a debased neo-paganism and an impotent imitation of the style of Michelangelo; and, as we have already noted, this decline was followed, towards the end of the century, by a period of reaction, during which the aim of one school (that of Caravaggio) was nominally a return to the precepts of Leonardo—to the study and imitation of nature—but was really the presentment of unrestrained human nature, while the rival school of *Eclectics* preached and practised ‘selection’ from the various styles and methods of former artists. Neither school has had any really important influence on the *progress* of art, although they both excited very great admiration—an admiration that continued to exist almost undiminished until middle Victorian days—and an imitation which has adorned our galleries with many fine and cumbered them with many monstrous and worthless pictures.

### CINQUECENTO SCHOOLS OF PAINTING

Let us now glance at the six important schools of Cinquecento Italian painting. Then, as in former chapters on art, I shall give a somewhat full account of a few of the most representative painters (in this case they will be Leonardo da Vinci, Fra Bartolomeo, and Raphael), showing how their lives fit in with the history of their age, and endeavouring to point out the true value of their works.

(1) **The Lombard School.** We have in a former chapter noted early Milanese painters, such as Vincenzo Foppa and Bergognone (the ‘Fra Angelico of Lombardy’) and Amb. de

course, a very different thing from *Eclecticism*, such as that of the Carracci. Nor can Raphael be called a *Realist*, for, as he wrote to Castiglione in reference to the *Galatea*, he ‘made use of certain ideals that formed themselves in his mind.’ Goethe, I think, was right in affirming that he was of all Italian painters the one most imbued with the Greek spirit. As one out of many proofs of this might be cited his Bergamo *St. Sebastian* (a fairly early work), in which, with truly Greek spirit, he has rejected the common and harrowing representation of the saint as riddled with arrows, and has given us a handsome smiling youth holding a symbolic arrow in his hand.

## ART (1500-1600)

Predis. The first of these remained unaffected by the advent of Leonardo da Vinci and by influences of the Roman and Florentine Cinquecentisti; the last, Foppa's pupil, became Leonardo's disciple, and may have even taken a share in the replica of the *Vierge aux Rochers*.

It was about 1482 that Leonardo settled at Milan, where, favoured by Lodovico il Moro, and later by the Moro's charming Duchess, Beatrice d'Este, he remained until the fall and capture of the ill-fated Duke in 1500. During these 18 years took root that *stile leonardesco* which exercised, if a less extended, a deeper and a nobler influence than that of the so-called High Renaissance, which it helped to develop. Leonardo's disciples, however, like those of many great artists and great thinkers, formed no school worthy of their master.<sup>1</sup> Luini, who is often called his pupil, and many of whose pictures used to be attributed to him, probably never entered his studio, although he certainly imitated skilfully the Leonardesque methods and has helped to perpetuate the mysterious and not very fascinating smile that we see in so many of Leonardo's pictures.<sup>2</sup>

(2) **Siena** can boast of only one great Cinquecento artist, namely, Giov. Ant. Bazzi, better known (probably from his birthplace) as Il Sodoma—if indeed the painter of the *Ecstasy of St. Catherine* (in S. Domenico at Siena) and of the popular *St. Sebastian* (in the Uffizi) and the still more popular *Christ Bound to the Pillar* (Siena, Accademia) merits the epithet 'great.' His first works (at Siena, whither he came early in life from his native Vercelli) are almost Peruginesque. About 1500 he migrated to Milan and was deeply influenced by Leonardo's style; but in 1507 he was summoned to Rome

<sup>1</sup> There are some fine, little known, pictures by his pupils Boltraffio, Da Sesto, Melzi, and Solari. Among them is an *Ecce Homo* by Solari of great dignity. Berenson says, 'Leonardo's heads of women and children had a tendency to *sweetness*, which was kept down by his sovereign power over form, but which was bound to assert itself directly that power was lacking.' For the 'Accademia' of Leonardo see note to Frontispiece.

<sup>2</sup> Gaudenzio Ferrari was probably Luini's pupil, and excelled him greatly in dramatic power. Fine frescos and easel-pictures by him are at Arona, Vercelli, and Milan. Like Luini, he worked among the Lombard lakes and mountains.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

and ordered to decorate the *Stanza della Segnatura*, and Raphael, whose wondrous frescos soon afterwards also adorned the ceiling and walls of this *Stanza*, was so pleased with his work that (if we may believe Morelli) he introduced his portrait together with his own in the *School of Athens*. Under the influence of Rome and of Raphael the earlier style of Il Sodoma, which some critics find delightfully idyllic, was exchanged for an ambitious Raphaellesque manner which he was not strong enough to use with mastery—as is proved by his three above-mentioned pictures as well as by the *Marriage of Alexander and Roxana*.<sup>1</sup>

(3) **Florence** was the home of Leonardo da Vinci until, at about 30 years of age, he went to Milan; and the pride that the Florentines felt in his celebrity naturally made them susceptible to his influence. No Leonardesque school was formed, although Lorenzo Credi, his former fellow-pupil in the famous *bottega* of Verrocchio, became professedly his imitator; but all the chief Florentine painters of the early Cinquecento were influenced by his works.

Of these painters most worthy of mention are Piero di Cosimo, Fra Bartolomeo, Albertinelli, and Andrea del Sarto.<sup>2</sup> Piero di Cosimo is a painter who has been largely rediscovered of late and is highly esteemed by critics. His *chef-d'œuvre* is the fresco in the Cappella Sistina representing the destruction of Pharaoh in the Red Sea. A very fine portrait of *la bella Simonetta* by him is at Chantilly (p. 388 n.). Of Fra Bartolomeo I give below a short monograph, as his life has interesting points of contact with Florentine history. Andrea del Sarto, the pupil of Piero—to whom, however, he had no affinity—and later an ardent student of Leonardo and of Fra Bartolomeo, I must pass over with a few words. We are told that although he deserves the name, given him by

<sup>1</sup> In an upper, not easily accessible, room of the Villa Farnesina. I know it only by photographs.

<sup>2</sup> Raphael too, although only temporarily Florentine, should be mentioned, for he eagerly studied the *Cartoon* and other works of Leonardo, who may be considered his veritable master more than Timoteo Viti or Perugino. From him he learnt the true principles of composition, modelling, and chiaroscuro.



contemporaries, of *il pittore senza errori*, he has no soul; but there is something in the *Madonna del Sacco*,<sup>1</sup> and not a few other works of his, which seems to intimate a very fair substitute. The finest of his easel-paintings are perhaps the noble *Dispute on the Trinity* (Pitti) and the *Madonna delle Arpie* (Uffizi), which is so called from the Harpies that decorate the base of the Virgin's throne. In this Madonna appear the beautiful features, so often to be seen in Andrea's later works, of that Lucrezia who about this time became his wife, and who—if we are to believe the personal rancour of Vasari, a pupil of Andrea's—ruined the artist's life and made him degrade his art in order to meet the penury caused by her extravagances. The most regrettable habit of overloading his figures with voluminous masses of drapery<sup>2</sup>—a habit that he probably derived from Fra Bartolomeo—mars woefully some of the works of Andrea del Sarto, and even in the beautiful *Madonna of the Sack* ('Flight to Egypt') the effect of the very thick and heavy robes is suffocating when one thinks of Egypt.

Andrea del Sarto (d. 1531) was the last of the great Florentine painters. Three of his followers should be mentioned—the last two as most excellent portrait-painters: firstly, his friend and imitator, Franciabigio (a pupil of Albertinelli), whose *Marriage of the Virgin*<sup>3</sup> and *Scenes from the Baptist's Life*, in the Annunziata and the Scalzo, compete with Andrea's frescos; secondly, another of his pupils and assistants, Pontormo, whose *Visitation*, in the same court of the Annunziata, rivals still more successfully the frescos of his master; thirdly, Bronzino, a pupil of Pontormo's, to whom are attributed very numerous portraits of the Medici and other notabilities.<sup>4</sup> In their earlier

<sup>1</sup> In the cloister of SS. Annunziata, Florence. As regards composition and drawing the frescos in the court of the Annunziata (especially the *Nativity of the Virgin*), done when he was barely 20, and the *Life of the Baptist* in the cloister of the Scalzo (Barefoot Friar) are perhaps his finest works.

<sup>2</sup> 'This tailor's son had but his father's soul' (see *Aurora Leigh*) sums up some modern 'appreciations.'

<sup>3</sup> Angered at the unveiling of this fresco before it was finished, the painter aimed at the Virgin's head a blow with a hammer, traces of which are still visible.

<sup>4</sup> Those of Lucrezia Panciatichi and of Eleonora of Toledo with her son Don Garzia (Uffizi) are perhaps Bronzino's best.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

style and as portrait-painters Pontormo and Bronzino nearly, if not quite, attained greatness, but they both unfortunately fell under the spell of 'Michelangelismo' and produced works of empty grandiosity (such as several in the Uffizi and in our National Gallery) which revealed their limitations. Pontormo was wise enough to recognize this fact, and at his request he was buried beneath his fresco of the *Marriage of the Virgin*. One should perhaps mention here the very poor artist and very interesting art-historian Vasari (1512-1574) and Cr. Allori, court artist to the Medici and painter of the justly celebrated *Judith* (Uffizi).

(4) It will be remembered that during the middle and later Quattrocento some of the Popes, for instance Nicholas V and Sixtus IV, attracted to **Rome** by their generous patronage a number of painters from North and Central Italy, such as Fra Angelico, Melozzo da Forli, Botticelli, Ghirlandaio, Signorelli, Perugino, and Pinturicchio. But it was the advent of Bramante (whose 'Tempietto' began the High Classical Renaissance in Rome in 1502), and that of Michelangelo (1505) and Raphael (1508), which made Rome during the early Cinquecento, though it produced no artists, the centre of Italian art, Florence having surrendered her supremacy and Venice being late and slow in winning recognition for her new and splendid school of painting.

The rise and fall of the so-called Roman school will be indicated sufficiently in the subsequent accounts of Raphael and Michelangelo, so we may pass over the first period of the High Renaissance—that period which is often called the Golden Age of the Medicean Pope, Leo X, although it was Julius II who invited Raphael and Michelangelo to Rome and who by his character deserves to be regarded as the Cinquecento Augustus, or Maecenas, far more than the self-complacent and pompous Leo, who had no real appreciation for what was great or beautiful in art and merely cared to use artists for his own glorification. After Leo's death (two years after that of Raphael) the philistine Adrian VI hunted scholars and artists from the Vatican and from Rome and dispersed

520

## ART (1500-1600)

valuable collections of books and works of art. His successor, Clement VII, although, like Leo X, of the art-loving house of the Medici, disappointed expectations, doubtless partly on account of the disasters that during his pontificate came upon Rome and Italy. The sack of Rome by German Lutherans and Spaniards in 1527 dispersed Roman artists.<sup>1</sup> Then came a period during which, with the exception of the gifted but coarse-natured Giulio Romano, all the numerous and devoted scholars of Raphael fell into a slough of mediocrity, from which they tried to save themselves by desperate but futile efforts to imitate the grandeur of Michelangelo's style ; and ere that mighty genius died (1564) Rome was, as regards art, a desolation.

The revival that took place towards the end of the century extended its influence far into the next,<sup>2</sup> so it will be enough to explain the nature of the movement and mention a few names of the earlier artists. The Naturalist school, founded by Caravaggio (1569-1609), held the highest object of art to be the realistic presentment of nature in all her moods, and regarded as the most impressive of these moods the unrestrained emotions of human nature—thus ignoring the fact that all great art, as all great character, needs self-restraint and equipoise. Caravaggio gained at Rome, Naples, and Malta immense popularity by means of his realistic imitation, especially in portraits, and in *genre* pictures of sacred subjects, in which he introduced a great deal that is commonplace and vulgar and often painfully emotional. But he had indubitable genius, and his style possesses at times a breadth and nobility almost Michelangelesque.<sup>3</sup> At Naples the Naturalists were headed by the Spaniard Ribera (Spagnoletto), through whom

<sup>1</sup> Many found their way to France and introduced there Renaissance influences. Especially French decorative art was strongly influenced by Raphaellesque work, such as that of the *Loggie* ; and the school of Fontainebleau spread this style through a great part of Europe.

<sup>2</sup> Sassoferrato, the last of the genuine Eclectics, died in 1685 ; Salvator Rosa (also a poet and musician) was the last really fine artist descended from the Roman Naturalists.

<sup>3</sup> The *Beheading of the Baptist*, in Malta (Duomo), is perhaps his finest work.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

chiefly the influence of this school spread to Spain and became the source of much of the painful unrestraint and vulgarization of sacred subjects that characterizes some French schools of painting and sculpture, while a similar infection was carried to Flanders by Rubens, who contracted it during his visit to Rome.

The Eclectic (' Selective ') school was founded by Lodovico Carracci of Bologna, who educated as artists his still more celebrated nephews, Agostino and Annibale, the last of whom, as many others of the Eclectics, worked much in Rome and Naples. The original plan on which these painters determined to wage war against the Naturalists was (as we learn from a sonnet by Agostino) to form a combination of Raphaelesque design, Venetian 'action and shade,' Lombard colour, Michelangelo's 'terrible way,' the 'pure style of Correggio,' and so on. But they, and the best of their followers, rose above this hotchpotch method and developed an original power which (as had been the case with Raphael) allowed them to assimilate freely—and they did so even from the Naturalists—without remaining mere imitators.<sup>1</sup> The chief of the Eclectics born before the end of the Cinquecento, besides the Carracci, are the following, many of whose works have until the present day continued to excite the intense admiration of the unsophisticated, and doubtless will continue to do so in spite of all expert criticism.

Domenico Zampieri (Domenichino), though wanting in originality, has left works of very great nobility and beauty, one of the finest and best known of which is the *Communion of St. Jerome*, doubtless remembered by all those who have visited the Vatican. The motive is closely imitated from Agostino Carracci's picture at Bologna, but the various figures are invested with a dignity or grace such as few painters have ever surpassed. Guido Reni (b. 1575) is, again, a well-known name. Of his very numerous works—Madonnas, Sibyls, Ecce

<sup>1</sup> The originality of Annibale Carracci showed itself in the fact that he was one of the first of modern painters to produce genuine landscape. The art of Poussin and Claude Lorraine owed much to him.



## ART (1500-1600)

Homos, Cleopatras, etc. etc.—perhaps the best known are the great fresco of *Phoebus and Aurora* in the Rospigliosi Palace at Rome and the so-called portrait of Beatrice Cenci in the Barberini Palace; but it is at Bologna that is to be seen what is perhaps his finest work, notably the *Madonna della Pietà* and a *Crucifixion* of great beauty and dignity. Guido can scarcely be claimed as an orthodox Eclectic. He painted at different periods in very different styles, and in his saner and more vigorous manner attempted, as his *Aurora* shows, to realize ideals of beauty in form and face that he had formed by study of ancient sculpture. These ideals, however, degenerated ere long into insipid types of grace and prettiness.

The last follower of the Carracci that I shall mention is Guercino—so called from being squint-eyed. He was a free-lance rather than a sworn adherent, and he displayed powers somewhat similar to those of Guido Reni; and like him he passed through several phases. *Dido's Death* in the Spada Palace and the *Incredulity of St. Thomas* in the Vatican Gallery are perhaps his finest works. Later he adopted a softer and more graceful style and delicate combinations of colour. Of this style the *Sibyl* of the Uffizi and the *Hagar and Ishmael* of the Brera are well-known examples.

(5) **Parma** holds its high place in the history of art through Antonio Allegri, better known, from his birthplace, as Correggio. A consideration of his work takes us back again to the first third of the Cinquecento.

Correggio (1494-1534), like Raphael and Giorgione, died comparatively young. He resided mostly at Parma, where he led a quiet life; for his immense celebrity did not begin till after his death. His early works (produced probably at Modena and Bologna) were imitative of Francia and Raphael. At Parma he developed a style which exercised strong influences on Italian art. Perhaps the most important of these was what one may call an ethical influence. His work is full of *joyousness*—of strong and happy emotions, from the raptures of childhood to those of passionate love (voluptuous but not licentious) and to the 'dithyrambic ecstasies,' as Mr. Symonds

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

calls them, of saints and angels, and even of the Fates themselves, whom he depicts disporting themselves like Bacchantes. But this joyousness often fails to find fit expression, and even comes perilously near grotesqueness, on account of the artist's mania for foreshortening. He was the first—as says Sir Henry Layard—who warred systematically against flatness of surface. He delighted in producing the sensation of depth by perspective illusions caused by the position, often most ungainly, of his figures, and by the effects of *chiaroscuro*.<sup>1</sup> For instance, a Madonna would be depicted by him as seen from such a standpoint that her knees almost reach her chin while seated on her celestial throne; or she is, as in the *Assumption* of the Parma Duomo, throwing herself, at what one might call violently foreshortened full-length, backward on a bed of clouds, as if fainting in ecstatic rapture. This work of Correggio's—the painting of the cupola of the Parma Duomo—was his biggest undertaking. It is ardently admired by those who can appreciate fully the astounding feats of foreshortening accomplished by the painter, but the impression made on the uninitiated is generally that of mingled astonishment and consternation at the Redeemer plunging headlong through space, the supine and delirious Virgin, and the great multitude of angelic beings displaying their raptures by sprawling in innumerable foreshortened attitudes; and it must be confessed that the wit of Correggio's contemporaries, who christened his work *un guazzetto di rane* (a ragout of frogs), seems scarcely to surpass the irreverence of the painter himself.

But Correggio's best easel-pictures are of a totally different nature. They may lack imagination and nobility of outline<sup>2</sup> and composition, but they possess technical qualities of the highest order. Of these the most important is a mastery in the

<sup>1</sup> Melozzo da Forlì, who died in the year that Correggio was born, and Mantegna (*d.* 1506) were the first to attempt audacious foreshortenings, and this trickery later led to the many and often repulsive 'perspective' frescos with which cupolas and ceilings were disfigured.

<sup>2</sup> The perfection of Correggio's *sfumatura* often makes definite outline disappear—and definite outline seems to possess, in art, a very peculiar power of appeal.

## ART (1500-1600)

treatment of light and shade so incomparable that the artist well deserves the title given him by Natali and Vitelli—*il re della luce*. By means of ingenious contrasts he produces effects of the most dazzling brilliance and the darkest shadow, and by almost imperceptible gradations of light and colour he attains the most exquisite modelling and a voluptuous delicacy in depicting the nude so illusive that, as Giulio Romano remarked, one seems to be looking at real flesh. Many of his pictures are well known, such as the *Adoration* in the Uffizi, the so-called *Zingarella Madonna* at Naples, the *Vierge au Panier* and the lovely *Venus and Mercury* in our National Gallery, the *Giorno* and the *Danae* at Rome, and the *Notte* ('Adoration of the Shepherds') at Dresden—famous for the wonderful effect of the light that streams from the recumbent Child. At Dresden is also the not less famous *Reading Magdalen*, which Venturi has lately reattributed to Correggio, thus attempting to rescue it from the claws of Morelli, the great destroyer and resuscitator of art-reputations, who on account of the cold and flat colouring of the celebrated blue robe, and the copper plate on which the picture is painted, gave it away to some Flemish artist.

(6) The **Venetian** school, says Pater, 'apprehended more unerringly than any other the essence of what is pictorial.' The formula may perhaps help us to explain to our logical faculty why it is that when, in their wanderings through some great picture-gallery, unsophisticated persons enter the room of the Venetian painters they often feel inclined to exclaim, 'What a relief! This is *real* enjoyment.' But it is a pity that the author of *Marius the Epicurean* forgot to say what he meant by 'the essence of what is pictorial,' because it is quite impossible for us to attempt to discover it for ourselves, seeing that we must limit ourselves to a very brief sketch of the rise and development of Venetian Cinquecento painting, illustrated by references to a very few of the almost countless works of the five great painters, Giorgione, Palma Vecchio, Tiziano, Tintoretto, and Paolo Veronese, whose era extends a century and more beyond the extinction of the Raphaellesque

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

Roman school, right through the period of the Naturalist and Eclectic Revival.

Venice, as we have often seen, was always late in receiving mainland influences, and now, as late as 1516, Gian Bellini was still painting Early Renaissance Madonnas, 60 years after the death of Fra Angelico, and 88 after the death of Masaccio, at an epoch when Leonardo da Vinci had finished his *Cenacolo* and his *Mona Lisa*; and it was some 25 years after Botticelli's *Primavera* that the young Giorgione, two years younger than Michelangelo, began at Venice to introduce humanity and nature into pictures in the place of Biblical and ecclesiastic subjects, and to display that 'Giorgionesque spirit' and 'Giorgionesque style' of which art-critics had so much to say before somebody discovered the fact, if it be a fact, that of all the pictures attributed to Giorgione only *one* was painted by him.

Of Zorzi (Giorgio) of Castelfranco, known better as Giorgione, very little is known except that he died of the plague when about 33 years of age. The one picture that was certainly painted by him is an indescribably beautiful *Madonna and Two Saints* (at Castelfranco), which alone would prove him to have been a very great artist. All the rest of his easel-pictures, they say, have disappeared, like his once famous frescos on the Fondaco dei Tedeschi at Venice. The idyllic *Meeting of Jacob and Rachel* (Dresden) is given to Palma Vecchio, the *Tempestà* (Venice) to Paris Bordone, the *Concerto* (Pitti) to somebody else. For all these losses Morelli, Venturi, and others compensate his fame by attributing to him 'the most beautiful Venus in the world'—that *Sleeping Venus* which in the Dresden Gallery rivals a similar picture by Tiziano.

Palma Vecchio, a pupil of Gian Bellini, attached himself to Giorgione, and later to Tiziano, to whom several of his pictures have long been attributed. The dignity, grace, and power of Palma are well illustrated by his splendid portraits of queenly Venetian women, by his well-known *St. Barbara* in S. Maria Formosa, Venice, and by the afore-mentioned *Meeting of Jacob and Rachel*.



## ART (1500-1600)

In a history of Italian art Tiziano claims somewhat the same amount of space as that due to Milton in an equally voluminous history of English literature. But this book is not written from the point of view of the art-historian, and Tiziano's long life has scarcely any contact with general Italian history, his relations with the Emperor Charles V and with Alfonso of Ferrara being connected with no events of national importance.<sup>1</sup> His very numerous and very splendid pictures, moreover, are so well known that they scarcely need to be named. I shall therefore in connexion with this king of Venetian painters make a few remarks on some characteristics of Venetian Cinquecento painting.

The most easily recognizable of these characteristics is an exquisite sense for, a boundless delight in, and a wondrous use of colour. The paint is often so used that it seems no longer paint; it possesses the resplendent lucidity and richness of natural sunlit colour and the profundity of natural colour in shadow. This love of pure, rich colour was doubtless fostered by the splendours of sky and sea and the rare beauty of their city, with its churches and palaces of varicoloured marbles, to which the Venetians were accustomed. Fostered also assuredly by such surroundings was the love of magnificence and pageantry which shows itself in art as early as Gentile Bellini (*e.g.* in his gorgeous *Procession in St. Mark's Piazza*), and is especially conspicuous in the paintings of Paolo Veronese. Magnificence of apparel, too, characterizes the exceedingly fine and numerous portraits by Venetian artists of the Cinquecento.

In spite of the magical charm that Venetian art exercises on us the critical faculty is not always satisfied. We are often told that this art stands on a lower level than that of some other schools because, instead of being an earnest attempt of great and independent genius to intimate supernal truths, it merely aims at the glorification of the State,<sup>2</sup> or of wealth, or

<sup>1</sup> Tiziano lived 99 years, thrice as long as Giorgione, and like him died of the plague. His sepulchre in the Frari is a 19th-century monstrosity.

<sup>2</sup> *E.g.* the splendid frescos in the Doges' Palace (the earlier of which were destroyed by the fire of 1577). Note that the Republic of Florence employed painters comparatively little for self-glorification—the most notable exception

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

of some order or saint ;<sup>1</sup> moreover, that its methods are unspiritual—merely superb decoration and an appeal to our sensuous nature ; also that, as was to be expected of an art with such ideals, it neglected that which is an essential of all spiritually elevating art, namely, beauty and purity of form—of outline.<sup>2</sup>

But though we may not accept what seems to have been Ruskin's conclusion, namely that the greatest of colourists is the greatest of painters, and that therefore Tiziano—or Paolo Veronese?—is the greatest, there are perhaps methods of artistic revelation not dreamed of in the philosophy of art-critics, and at times one's soul seems to rejoice with these Venetian painters in their emancipation from the austerity and solemnity of the so-called religious sentiment and in their love for all that in nature and in human life satisfies the sense of beauty by its rich luxuriance and splendour.<sup>3</sup>

It is in 'profane' subjects and in portraiture that Tiziano is at his best. His 'religious' pictures are formal, revealing no deep religious convictions, although at times they reveal a deep sympathy with human feelings. In all art there is perhaps nothing more tender and delightful than the *Presentation*, in which amidst a scene splendid for architecture and rich apparel the little Virgin, a child of perhaps 10 years, clad in a simple frock, is ascending alone and with difficulty the great stairs leading up to the Temple. This picture alone—but it is by no means exceptional—would defend Venetian being Leonardo's and Michelangelo's cartoons for the Palazzo Vecchio, the loss of which has been scarcely compensated by Vasari's pretentious daubs.

<sup>1</sup> E.g. the Scuola di San Rocco, adorned by Tintoretto.

<sup>2</sup> 'It is a pity,' said Michelangelo, 'that at Venice they did not begin by learning to design well.' 'They achieved for colour,' says Mr. Symonds, 'what the Florentines had done for form.' Mr. Berenson affirms that the pure form (like that of an Athenian *stèle*) of the older Siennese painters makes them perhaps the most spiritual of Italian artists—though not so spiritual as the Chinese.

<sup>3</sup> Besides all the pageants, sacred and profane, of Venetian art, and besides the splendid series of portraits and the many *genre* pictures painted for the palaces of magnates, we can notice a profound love of nature in many fine *landscapes*, in which the figures are hardly more than accessories.

## ART (1500-1600)

Cinquecento painting against the charge of being merely gorgeously decorative.

Paolo Veronese is known to almost every one by his vast canvases, such as *The Marriage at Cana* (Louvre), which present Biblical scenes under the guise of magnificent Venetian *fêtes*, o'ercanopied by wondrous architecture.<sup>1</sup> Still more gorgeous are the allegorical and mythological glorifications of Venice (*Trionfi di Venezia*) in the Doges' Palace. The church of S. Sebastiano, where he is buried, is adorned by a large number of his frescos and altar-pieces.

Over the door of Tintoretto's studio, they say, was written *Disegno di Michelangelo e colorito di Tiziano*. He felt the truth of Michelangelo's criticism of Venetian painting and reacted so strongly to it that he may without exaggeration be called the Venetian Michelangelo—indeed Vasari, the contemporary of both, declared that he even outvied Michelangelo himself in *terribilità*, while Ruskin, a far better judge of art than Vasari, asserts that the Venetian surpassed the Florentine in dramatic power. Most certainly in poetic vision and strong imagination Tintoretto stands far above all other Venetians.<sup>2</sup> His attempt to vie with Tiziano in *colour* was perhaps not very successful; but many of his works, as the vast *Paradiso* in the Doges' Palace and the 56 great paintings in the Scuola di S. Rocco, are so deteriorated that one cannot tell whether the colouring may not have been originally as lovely as that of the *Ariadne Crowned by Venus* (Doges' Palace), which Mr. Symonds perhaps rightly calls 'the most beautiful oil-painting in the world.' Tintoretto's impetuosity of character showed itself not only in the rapidity of his work, which earned him the name *il fulmine della pittura*, but in

<sup>1</sup> Among the banqueters in *The Marriage of Cana* are our Queen Mary, Francis I, the Emperor Charles V, Vittoria Colonna, and Suleiman, conqueror of Rhodes. Among the musicians are Veronese himself and Tintoretto. The Inquisition condemned Veronese for profanity to seclusion in a convent!

<sup>2</sup> In the Duomo of Lucca there is a *Last Supper* by Tintoretto, painted in somewhat subdued colours, which, although apparently unnoticed by experts, has always seemed to me to be the most poetical and beautiful conception of the scene in all pictorial art.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

such disdainful acts as making presents of pictures to buyers who complained of his prices.

\* \* \* \* \*

I have now to give a few facts concerning the works of the three painters whom I selected, namely Leonardo da Vinci, Fra Bartolomeo, and Raphael, and to show how their lives fit in with the history of their age and country.

### LEONARDO DA VINCI (1452-1519)

Although as artist Leonardo must be classed among the painters of the High Renaissance, the greater part of his life belonged to the Quattrocento. He was born at Castello Vinci, not far north-east from Empoli, between Florence and Pisa. In 1470 he entered Verrocchio's studio, and before he left it (about 1476) he painted, it is said, that angel in Verrocchio's *Baptism*—one of his very rare extant works—which has made that picture specially interesting (see p. 404). At Florence Lorenzo de' Medici was at this period at the summit of his magnificence, Poliziano was composing his famous *Stanze*, and Botticelli painting his *Birth of Venus* and his *Primavera*. Leonardo seems to have received commissions from the Magnifico, and perhaps the unfinished *Adoration of the Magi* (Uffizi) was intended for the chapel in the Palazzo Vecchio, seeing that Lorenzo ordered an altar-piece in 1478, the year of the Pazzi conspiracy and the murder of Giuliano; and it is, I think, possible that the picture was left unfinished for reasons similar to those which prevented the completion of Poliziano's beautiful poem. About 1483 Leonardo seems to have settled at Milan,<sup>1</sup> where Lodovico il Moro had lately usurped supreme power. Some say he was sent thither by Lorenzo de' Medici as a skilful musician who wished to present the Moro with a silver lute of his own invention, fashioned like a horse's head. But there is extant a letter written by

<sup>1</sup> There is no actual proof of his residence at Milan till 1487, and a wild conjecture has been made that between 1481 and 1487 he travelled in the Far East, and even became a Moslem. His habit of writing from right to left has been explained as due to his Eastern experiences.



## ART (1500-1600)

Leonardo himself in which he recommends himself as skilful in devising military and other engines, and able to execute any work in architecture, painting, or sculpture, whether in marble or bronze, as well as any man whatsoever. This seems to indicate that he came to Milan for the purpose of undertaking the colossal bronze equestrian statue of Francesco Sforza that the Moro had determined to erect—an undertaking perhaps suggested by the part he took in Verrocchio's fine statue of the Venetian *condottiere* Colleone. On the clay model of the horse Leonardo spent many of the 16 years of his residence at Milan. Here, high in favour with the Duke and his charming youthful consort, Beatrice d'Este, he was engaged with all manner of work—more first-class work perhaps in a great variety of subjects than has ever been successfully undertaken by any other human being<sup>1</sup>—of which work, alas! the results are few; they include the *Cenacolo* (Last Supper), but do not include the great equestrian statue, the clay horse having been destroyed by the French, either when Duke Lodovico was deported to France in 1500 or shortly before the capture of King Francis at Pavia in 1525.

On the fall of the Moro Leonardo went to Venice, where he perhaps met the two old Bellini, and Cima, and Carpaccio, and the young Giorgione, and Tiziano, and Palma; and on his way to Venice he visited Isabella d'Este at Mantua and doubtless saw old Mantegna. In 1502 he began his service with Cesare Borgia as engineer—a rather deplorable abuse of his great gifts. In 1503 he was at Florence, designing his

<sup>1</sup> Among his inventions, or suggestions, may be mentioned 'cannon discharging incendiary matter and terrible smoke,' something somewhat like a 'tank,' a sort of submarine, and a mechanical device for flying, which he later wished to try from the summit of Monte Ceceri, near Fiesole. Some assert that he 'discovered the use of steam as a motive power.' Humboldt is said to have called him the greatest physicist of his age. In our days he has sometimes been called a dabbler and a painter with a very fictitious renown. That he was a great, if not an imaginative, painter can surely not be doubted. The contemporary Milanese novelist, Bandello, gives a vivid picture of Leonardo working at the great horse, and coming thence to S. M. delle Grazie to work at the *Cenacolo*, before which he would often stand for hours with crossed arms, never adding a touch; but sometimes he would work all day, forgetful of food and drink.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

grand cartoon in rivalry with Michelangelo (p. 550). Then during the next 13 years he spent much time in visiting various cities, among them Rome (for the coronation of Leo X), and travelling in North Italy with the French king, Francis I, who in 1516 took him to France; and with him went the *Mona Lisa* (the portrait of the wife of the Florentine Zanobi del Giocondo) which he had begun about four years previously. In 1519 he died, at Amboise—not, as sometimes stated, in the arms of Francis I, but perhaps in those of his Milanese pupil Melzi.<sup>1</sup>

About 20 of Leonardo's pictures mentioned by old writers are lost, and many that once were attributed to him are by Luini or others of his followers. Of the dozen or so that are certainly authentic, or ancient copies, the best known are the above-mentioned *Adoration of the Magi*, the *Cartoon*, the *Cenacolo*, *Beatrice d'Este* (see Frontispiece), the *Madonna and St. Anne*, and the *Vierge aux Rochers* (Louvre). The replica of the last in our National Gallery, attributed by Berenson to Amb. de Predis, has a most undeniable improvement in the altered position of the angel's hand, which in the original interferes with the Madonna's act of benediction.

Here, instead of under literature, may be mentioned Leonardo's very extensive and very interesting *Trattato della Pittura*, the larger edition of which has 912 and the shorter 365 chapters. Together with his very numerous drawings and MS. notes (at Windsor and elsewhere) this forms doubtless the finest treatise on designing and colouring that exists. Almost every possible attitude, action of muscles, facial expression, outline and character of features and limbs, fall and fold of drapery, variety of light, shade, reflexion, colour, etc. etc., are carefully described. His observation of nature and analysis of physical causes are wonderful, and many striking thoughts are interwoven on very various subjects. He insists on minute and reverent study of natural objects—such, for instance, as

The cloister in which he was buried was destroyed in 1808, and the only relics found of the great painter were two stones inscribed with LEO . . . INC . . .

## ART (1500-1600)

plants and lichens<sup>1</sup>—and denounces imitation of the work of other artists as a fatal error. Painting he regards as the supreme art; second he places sculpture, then music, and poetry lowest, as being merely 'painting with words'—the difference between painting and poetry being the same as that between deeds and words.

### FRA BARTOLOMEO (1475-1517)

Baccio della Porta—so called because his father, a retired mule-driver, lived near the Porta di S. Pier Gattolini, outside Florence—at the age of 9 entered the studio of Cosimo Rosselli, where in course of time he became a zealous student of Masaccio and Leonardo da Vinci, while his great friend Albertinelli devoted himself to a study of ancient sculpture.<sup>2</sup> In 1492, in which year his father and also Lorenzo de' Medici died, he and Albertinelli set up a *bottega* (studio) together. He had by this time come under the influence of Savonarola, whose faithful disciple he remained all his life. In 1497, when Savonarola, after the expulsion of Piero de' Medici, was supreme in the new Republic, Baccio was one of the *Piagnoni* artists who burnt their paintings of the nude on the great Carnival pyre.<sup>3</sup> He was 23 years old when the great Friar met his tragic fate, an event which so affected him that in 1500 he took vows in the Dominican convent at Prato and was henceforth known as Fra Bartolomeo. From Prato he was transferred to S. Marco at Florence, where for four years he entirely laid aside his painting; but finally the Prior broke through his determination, doubtless by pointing out that Savonarola himself had advised the Brothers who had no call for theology to work at art.

<sup>1</sup> He even advises artists to study, and to note for use, the curious and grotesque forms of damp-stains, etc., to quicken their imagination. But he himself had no really great poetic imagination.

<sup>2</sup> Albertinelli, whose wonderfully beautiful picture of the *Visitation* is known to all who know the Uffizi Gallery, soon confessed the superiority of his friend's genius and became his imitator. He offered a great contrast to the serious Bartolomeo, being vivacious almost to ribaldry. He joined the *Arrabbiati* and was a great mocker of the pious *Piagnoni*.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 340 n.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

In 1504 Raphael came to Florence, and not only studied Bartolomeo's methods of using oil-colours but was deeply impressed by the grandeur of his *Last Judgment*, while, as we shall see, Raphael's *dolce stil nuovo*—Umbrian grace wedded to the power of Masaccio—began to be discernible in the works of the Frate. On Raphael's departure for Rome in 1508 Fra Bartolomeo obtained leave from the Prior to visit Venice. Here, as Leonardo had done some 8 years before, he became intimately acquainted, as is proved by his later pictures, with the works of the Bellini, Carpaccio, and Cima, and of younger painters, such as Giorgione and Tiziano. After his return he and his friend Albertinelli for three years worked in partnership and many fine pictures were produced.<sup>1</sup>

In 1514 he yielded to Raphael's entreaties and visited Rome, but his health suffered severely from malaria, and after two months he was again in Florence, where, although constantly suffering from renewed attacks of malarial fever which compelled periods of rest at a Dominican hospital near Fiesole, he painted many of his grandest pictures—the last and finest of which was the *Deposition (Pietà)*, now one of the treasures of the Pitti Gallery. In October 1517 he died of a severe renewal of the malarial fever, perhaps occasioned, as Vasari asserts, by too free indulgence in fogs.

It is impossible for me to describe at any length the paintings of Fra Bartolomeo, or to discuss his greatness as an artist; but irrespective of their artistic value two at least of his works are of supreme interest as marking the transition from the conceptions and methods of older painters to those of the new era—initiated by Leonardo and perfected by Raphael. The two of his works that are specially important in this respect are his fresco of the *Last Judgment*, and the very beautiful altar-piece in the Cappella del Santuario of the Lucca Cathedral representing the Madonna with St. Stephen and the Baptist.

The first of these works was begun in the year of Savonarola's martyrdom (1498), and when Bartolomeo took vows as *frate*

<sup>1</sup> Those on which they both worked are marked by a cross between two rings.



## ART (1500-1600)

he left the fresco to be finished by Albertinelli. For four centuries it was allowed to decay on the damp wall of the Campo Santo of the hospital (S. Maria Nuova) where it was painted, and now its faded and discoloured relics, transferred to canvas, lend great interest to one of the important rooms in the Uffizi Gallery. Enough remains to allow us to see that in general conception it is, one might say, almost medieval, reminding one of the Pisan Campo Santo,<sup>1</sup> although many of the figures, both terrestrial and celestial, display an art not inferior to that of Masaccio. It offers a very striking contrast to the second work of Bartolomeo's that I have mentioned—the altar-piece in the Duomo of Lucca<sup>2</sup>—which was painted on his return from Venice. This picture is perhaps the first fully developed specimen of what Vasari calls the modern style. The influence of Leonardo da Vinci is evident in the modelling and management of masses of light and shade, while that of the 'sweet new style' of Raphael is discernible in the grace of the hovering angels and in the new dramatic method of composition; and in the colouring and the boy-angel in the foreground playing a musical instrument (a device of the Bellini and Carpaccio) we see the influence of Venice.

Had Bartolomeo remained faithful to this style he would have doubtless produced other and finer works of a similar character, which would have won him a foremost place in the ranks of great if not sublimely creative artists. Unluckily his visit to Rome brought him in contact with the apparently irresistible influence of Michelangelo, and among his later works (such as the huge St. Mark, in the Pitti) there are too many which show a futile ambition to vie with the grandeur of the Sistine Chapel Prophets and Sibyls. And unfortunately

<sup>1</sup> Especially the upper part, which alone seems to be by Bartolomeo. The arrangement of this part may possibly have influenced Raphael in his celebrated *Disputa*. Fra Angelico, says Vasari, is among the Blessed in this *Last Judgment*.

<sup>2</sup> Of about the same date and much in the same style is the very fine *St. Catharine and the Magdalen* painted for the monks of Murano (Venice), but never consigned, and now in the Lucca Gallery.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

Fra Bartolomeo's name is apt to call to mind these later, heavily draped, somewhat ungainly figures.

### RAPHAEL<sup>1</sup>

So much has been said about Raphael in former chapters that for my purpose it may suffice if here I indicate the three chief periods of his life, and give a few facts about the most important of his paintings.

(I) **First Period:** Urbino and Perugia (1483-1504). Raphael's father, Giovanni Santi, was himself a painter, as well as a considerable poet, and perhaps was his son's first teacher.<sup>2</sup> But he died in 1494, and the boy then became (as Morelli has lately discovered) the pupil of a young Urbino painter, Timoteo Viti, who had studied under Francia at Bologna.<sup>3</sup> Raphael's paintings produced while still at Urbino have a great similarity to works by Viti. Among these paintings the best known are perhaps two small works, one (a picture of exquisite beauty) in our National Gallery called a *Vision of a Knight*, and the other, a somewhat grotesquely Dantesque *St. Michael*, in the Louvre. Also a picture of the *Three Graces* (Chantilly), exquisitely modelled, copied probably from the Greek sculpture in Siena Cathedral, and an altar-piece, of which only the predella panels exist, are attributed to this period. They show great similarity to Viti's work and have in their background, as does the *Vision of a Knight*, landscape most beautiful, but certainly not Perugin-esque.

In 1500, now about 17 years old, Raphael joined the band

<sup>1</sup> As explained in the Preface, I use the forms of names (Italian, Latin, or English) which seem to come most naturally. The Apocryphal form 'Raphael' was frequently used by the painter himself, instead of 'Raffaello,' and occurs in his well-known Latin epitaph, by Cardinal Bembo, in the Pantheon.

<sup>2</sup> His portraits (as that of Boëthius, given in *Medieval Italy*) are fine. In one of his sacred pictures (at Cagli) a boy-angel probably is a portrait of the child Raphael. Giovanni's *Chronicle of Duke Frederic of Urbino* is a poem of about 23,000 lines in *terza rima*. It gives many interesting notices of contemporary artists and other persons.

<sup>3</sup> Viti later became a follower of Raphael, and painted, as well as other fine works, the Prophets above Raphael's Sibyls in S. Maria della Pace (Rome).

## A R T (1500-1600)

of assistants attached to Perugino's *bottega* in Perugia, and very soon assimilated this master's style so entirely that, says Vasari, a *Crucifixion* and a *Coronation of the Virgin* would have passed for Perugino's had they not borne the signature 'Raphael Urbinas.' In 1502 Perugino, who drove a thriving trade with his big art-shops at Perugia and Florence, went for a time to the latter city, and Raphael attached himself to the master-painter Pinturicchio, lately returned from Rome. It was during 1503 to 1507 that Pinturicchio was engaged on his fine frescos in the Biblioteca Piccolomini at Siena, and, in spite of experts, it seems to me very probable that, though by 30 years Raphael's senior, he was indebted to him at least as regards the designs of these paintings.<sup>1</sup> And evidently the influence was mutual; for some of Raphael's earliest Madonna-pictures, painted about this time, seem inspired by Pinturicchio's work.

The first work of Raphael that shows real independence is the very beautiful and celebrated *Sposalizio* (Brera), the design of which was not, as once believed, derived from Perugino.<sup>2</sup> After this was finished (1504) he revisited Urbino. Here the gentle, gout-afflicted Duke Guidobaldo, who had been expelled by the rapacious Cesare Borgia, had lately returned, warmly welcomed by his people, and had begun once more to attract artists and scholars to his court, of which we have such a vivid description in the *Cortegiano*, written (c. 1503-1508) by Raphael's friend, Castiglione. By the sister of Guidobaldo (mother of the next Duke) Raphael was given a letter of introduction to Piero Soderini, who in 1502, as may be remembered, had been elected perpetual supreme magistrate (Gonfaloniere) of Florence.

<sup>1</sup> See Fig. 19 and p. 239. A Siennese priest's list of Pinturicchio's assistants does not include Raphael. He probably only contributed designs; but he was about this time at Siena if his *Three Graces* were copied from the Siena sculpture.

<sup>2</sup> The so-called Caen Perugino is now said to be by a pupil of Perugino's and imitated from Raphael. But surely Perugino's Sistine Chapel fresco (c. 1482) of St. Peter receiving the keys reminds one at once of the *Sposalizio*. Raphael's temple is later Renaissance—perhaps designed by his fellow-townsmen and relative Bramante; Perugino's reminds one of Brunelleschi.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

(2) **Second Period.** At Florence, where he arrived towards the end of 1504, Raphael found a group of famous older artists—Botticelli, Perugino, Andrea della Robbia, and Leonardo da Vinci. Besides these were Fra Bartolomeo (now about 30 years of age and just resuming his painting) and his coeval, Michelangelo—and the youth Andrea del Sarto, still



RAPHAEL

a pupil in the studio of Piero di Cosimo. Only a few months before his arrival the famous meeting of artists had taken place to choose a site for Michelangelo's *David*, and now both Michelangelo and Leonardo were designing the cartoons of the frescos which were to adorn the great *Sala* of the Palazzo Vecchio. To Leonardo's new methods in painting and to Michelangelo's wondrous plastic genius Raphael was strongly attracted. But besides eagerly studying Leonardo's *Magi* and his *Cartoon*<sup>1</sup> and Michelangelo's *David* he spent much time in

copying the old frescos of Masaccio in the Carmine church.

During the first part of this Florentine period Raphael began the continuous production of those masterpieces of incomparable beauty or grandeur the great number of which, considering his short life, is so astonishing. Among these masterpieces the portraits have an important place. He had already painted a most wonderfully vivid portrait of his master Perugino (Borghese Gallery, Rome), and he now produced the justly celebrated portraits of the Florentine Angelo Doni and his wife (Pitti), and, perhaps rather later, the still more famous one of himself (Uffizi). Of his other well-known paintings of this period I can only mention the *Madonna del Gran Duca* (Pitti), the *Casa Tempi Madonna* (Munich), and the *Ansidei Madonna*, that glory of our National

<sup>1</sup> In the Louvre is a beautiful pen-and-ink copy by Raphael of the *Mona Lisa*. The illustration here given is from the portrait by himself.



## ART (1500-1600)

Gallery which was bought, from Blenheim, for £72,000. This picture represents the Virgin enthroned under a lofty canopy in the Umbrian fashion, and it was probably painted at Perugia, which Raphael revisited in 1505-1506. From Perugia he went to his home in Urbino, where, besides other works, he painted a fine picture of *St. George and the Dragon*, which his friend Castiglione was commissioned by Duke Guidobaldo to take as a present to our Henry VII, seeing that Guidobaldo had lately received the Order of the Garter.<sup>1</sup> On his return to Florence, as both Leonardo and Michelangelo had left, he was drawn into closer intimacy with Fra Bartolomeo, whose influence is very perceptible in the *Madonna del Baldacchino* (Pitti) and the *St. Catharine* of our National Gallery. Among other master-works of this period are the *Belle Jardinière* (Louvre), the *Madonna del Cardellino* (Uffizi), and that rather unattractive attempt in the grand style, the *Entombment* (Rome).

If Raphael was still at Urbino in September 1506 he probably saw Julius II, who visited that city on his way north to attack Bologna, and possibly he talked to the Pope about his kinsman Bramante, and about Michelangelo, both of whom were now at Rome; possibly also the visit to Rome of Francesco della Rovere, nephew to Julius, on his succession to the Urbino duchy in 1508, reminded the Pontiff of the talented and attractive young Urbinate painter. However that may be, in 1508 Raphael received an invitation from Julius II, forwarded by Bramante, and betook himself to Rome, where he spent the last 12 years of his life.

(3) **The Roman Period.** In November of 1507 Pope Julius, irritated at being constantly reminded of Alexander VI, had abandoned the Borgia apartments, richly decorated for that detested Pontiff by Pinturicchio, and had chosen as his residence the suite of four large rooms (*Stanze*) built by Nicholas V, looking out on the Belvedere Court.<sup>2</sup> To decorate these

<sup>1</sup> The smaller *St. George* (Louvre) was evidently earlier. The one taken to England was sold after the execution of Charles I and returned to Italy, and thence went to Russia.

<sup>2</sup> For the 'Studio' of Nicholas V, painted by Fra Angelico, see p. 235.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

rooms he had commissioned Perugino, Pinturicchio, Signorelli, Sodoma, the Venetian Lotto, and others. Raphael was enjoined to paint the ceiling of the *Stanza della Segnatura*,<sup>1</sup> and his wonderfully beautiful symbolical figures of Theology (or *Religion*), Philosophy (or *Knowledge*), Poetry (or *Imagination*), and Law (or *Morals*)—symbols at once of the four divisions of Literature and of the four methods of communion between the human mind and the world of Ideal Truth—so enchanted the Pope that he commissioned the young artist to cover the walls of the *Stanza* with frescos.

These frescos are large historical and mythological illustrations of the subjects presented by symbolical figures in the medallions of the ceiling.<sup>2</sup> The wrongly named *Disputa del Sacramento* does not represent a dispute about Transubstantiation, but the Sacrament as the special means of spiritual communion between earth and heaven—the world of spirit and that of earthly existence being most wondrously indicated in the two parts of the picture. In choosing his saints and theologians Raphael was guided, it is said, by the advice of such authorities as his friends Cardinals Bembo and Bibbiena (Dovizi), and, as in the case of other frescos, besides studying Dante and the Platonists, he consulted famous scholars and literary men, such as Castiglione and Ariosto. Among the doctors we may be surprised to find one who had lately been hanged and burnt as a heretic, namely, Savonarola; but the victim of the atrocious Borgia doubtless found favour with Pope Julius II. Near to Savonarola stands Dante—as theologian—although he had dared to condemn more than one Pope to hell-fire. Among the divines on the left is Fra Angelico.

The so-called *School of Athens* (a stupid designation of the 17th century) intimates the triumph of human reason—a

<sup>1</sup> See p. 518 for the co-operation of Sodoma. The scenes (*Fall, Apollo and Marsyas, Judgment of Solomon*, etc.) on the pendentives are also by Raphael and treat the same subjects.

<sup>2</sup> Vasari states—perhaps falsely—that frescos newly painted by other artists were obliterated for this purpose, and that Raphael's respect for his old master saved Perugino's work.

## ART (1500-1600)

splendid hall, perhaps imitated from Bramante's design for the new St. Peter's, filled with groups of great philosophers and men of science. In the central and dominating figures of Plato and Aristotle are finely characterized and contrasted the two great schools of human thought—as different and as indispensable to each other as the convex and concave of the arc. There are many portraits—among them those of Raphael himself with Sodoma (p. 518), and Castiglione in the guise of Zoroaster, and Bramante in that of Euclid or Archimedes.

The other two walls are each broken by a great window, and here Raphael showed his wonderful skill in fitting the most beautiful and natural compositions into difficult spaces. In the fresco of *Parnassus* the central figure, Apollo, is said to have been a portrait of a famous violinist (San Secondo) of the Moro's court. Among the greatest singers we find again the well-known face of Dante. Ariosto (perhaps) is seen eagerly listening to the recitation of the blind Homer. Petrarca is to be seen not far from Sappho. Doubtless there are many portraits of contemporaries which we fail to recognize. One of the Muses is sometimes thought to represent Vittoria Colonna.

In the fourth fresco, of which the subject is Jurisprudence (and the Sense of Right), we have the cardinal Virtues and figures of great lawgivers, Moses, Solon, Justinian, and Pope Gregory IX, whose face is a portrait of Julius II.

In the frescos of the second and third *Stanze* Raphael no longer follows freely his poetic imagination. His genius is employed for the glorification of the Papacy. In the *Expulsion of Heliodorus* from the Temple of Jerusalem—a symbol of the expulsion of the French from Northern Italy after the battle of Ravenna (1512)—we have Pope Julius gazing joyously at the scene while seated in a litter, the foremost bearer of which is said to be a portrait of the celebrated engraver Marc Antonio. Also in the *Mass of Bolsena* the kneeling priest is Julius. And after the death of this Pope in 1513 Raphael and his assistants produced a series of frescos

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

in which Leo X figures, now as Leo I confronting Attila,<sup>1</sup> now as Leo III crowning Charles the Great (whose face is a portrait of Francis I of France), now as Leo IV conquering Saracens at Ostia or extinguishing the *Incendio del Borgo* with the sign of the Cross.<sup>2</sup>

Raphael continued to produce designs for the remaining frescos of the *Stanze*, but these were to a considerable extent executed by his pupils, for during the last years of his life he had an immense amount of work on his hands. On the death of Bramante, in 1514, he was made, as we shall see in a later chapter, the chief architect of the new St. Peter's, in association with the aged Fra Giocondo. At this time he was still painting the *Stanza d'Eliodoro*. In 1515 he was made by Pope Julius the chief Inspector of Antiquities, and spent much time and energy in publishing, with the assistance of the antiquarian Fulvius, a very voluminous description (now lost) of all the ancient monuments in Rome. In this very year he was also engaged on one of his greatest works—the cartoons for the Tapestries.<sup>3</sup> The subject given the artist was the Life of Christ and the Acts of the Apostles. His marvellously beautiful and dignified designs need no description, as they are perhaps the best known of all his creations. During 1518–1519 the lovely decorations of the *Loggie*, including the series of Biblical scenes ("Raphael's Bible") that adorn the ceilings, were designed and some doubtless painted by Raphael's own hand; and about the same time he furnished the designs for the well-known and still exceedingly beautiful—though at a later epoch crudely bedaubed—frescos of *Cupid and Psyche* in the Villa

<sup>1</sup> The Pope's white horse (some call it a mule!) is traditionally the charger which Leo X rode at the battle of Ravenna, where he was made prisoner, just a year before his election as Pope. Raphael's *Liberation of St. Peter* from prison by an angel evidently symbolizes the escape from captivity of Cardinal Giovanni (Leo X).

<sup>2</sup> For the story of the Fire see *Medieval Italy*, pp. 297 n., 318 n.

<sup>3</sup> Ordered by Leo X as a further adornment for the Cappella Sistina. They were woven, it seems, not at Arras, but at Brussels, although their Italian name is *Arazzi*. The originals, twice carried away by 'barbarians,' are still in the Vatican. Old copies are to be seen in Berlin, Dresden, Vienna, and Paris. The cartoons of seven are extant—in the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington.



## ART (1500-1600)

Chigi (now Farnesina) which were executed, probably, by Giulio Romano.<sup>1</sup> It was while he was occupied so intensely with the *Stanze* frescos and with these many other activities that Raphael also produced many of his finest easel-paintings. Of these the chief are: *Madonna del Pesce* and *Lo Spasimo* (Madrid); *Vierge au Diadème* (Louvre); *Madonna di Casa d'Alba* (Petrograd); *Madonna della Sedia* (Pitti); *Bridgewater Gallery Madonna*; *Madonna di Foligno* (once in Aracoeli, now in Vatican); *Santa Cecilia* (Bologna); *Madonna di San Sisto* (Dresden); portrait of Julius II (see Fig. 50); of Leo X and cardinals (Fig. 51); of Inghirami (America; copy in Pitti); of Castiglione (Fig. 64); of Cardinal Bibbiena (Dovizi of Bibbiena, Raphael's friend), of which the Pitti version, representing him as much older than in the Madrid original, is perhaps by a pupil of Raphael's. Lastly, the very beautifully painted *Donna Velata* of the Pitti Gallery is evidently the portrait of a Roman lady of rank and refinement—possibly an intimate friend of Raphael's. The story of the baker's daughter (*Fornarina*) is nowadays discredited. The rather coarse portrait called *La Fornarina* in the Barberini Gallery is probably by Giulio Romano, and the splendidly painted picture in the Uffizi which used to be labelled with the names of Raphael and the 'Fornarina' is now attributed to Michelangelo's friend and Raphael's gifted but ungenerous detractor, Sebastiano del Piombo.

Raphael's last work was the *Transfiguration* (Vatican), or probably—one is glad to believe—only the upper part of this world-famous but somewhat disconcerting picture.<sup>2</sup> It—probably only the upper half—was hung, it is said, at the head of the bed on which he lay dead, and was carried in the funeral

<sup>1</sup> Raphael had already (1514) painted in the hall of this villa the splendidly vigorous fresco of Galatea, and at the entreaty of the delighted owner, the rich banker Agostino Chigi, he had in the same year painted in S. Maria della Pace his celebrated Sibyls.

<sup>2</sup> But the design of the lower part was doubtless by Raphael. The work was for Cardinal Giulio de' Medici (Clement VII), and was painted in competition with Sebastiano del Piombo's *Raising of Lazarus*. Even the upper portion is surely disconcertingly theatrical and verging on painful grandiosity in attitude and drapery.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

procession. He lies buried in the Pantheon, and on his tomb is engraved the fine Latin couplet composed by his friend Cardinal Bembo :

*Ille est hic Raphael, timuit quo sospite vinci  
Rerum magna parens, et moriente mori.*

### SCULPTURE

Variety, complexity, contrast, movement, extension—by such words one might try to characterize the chief modes of modern feeling and thought, whereas the essential qualities of great sculpture are intimated by words such as pure colourless form, restfulness, simplicity, restraint, limitation to the moment, concentration. Evidently painting—the relation of which to sculpture resembles that of the prismatic spectrum to colourless sunlight—is far more expressive than any statue or any relief can be of the modern spirit—that spirit which, in spite of all denial, owes most of its characteristics to Christianity.<sup>1</sup> It is therefore but natural that in spite of all the influences of the classical revival the great sculptors of the era under consideration are incomparably fewer than the great painters. Although our ignorance of ancient Greek painting may possibly mislead us, it seems that the Hellenic spirit found its fullest artistic expression in that sculpture the relics of which are unrivalled in the world except by the works of two or three Italian artists. And these owed their success to the fact that they adopted not the outlook of their own age but that of the ancient Hellas.<sup>2</sup> Putting aside merely decorative sculpture and the elegancies and inanities of such monumental art as that of Rossellini and Mino da Fiesole, we find already in Donatello's *David*—the first undraped bronze of the Renaissance era—that Greek love of beauty and

<sup>1</sup> Painting allows intimation of the infinite ; sculpture is limited to perfection of the finite, and is thus specially pagan.

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps rather the outlook of later Greek (or even Roman-Greek) art—which some devotees of Pheidias and pre-Pheidias sculpture so unreasonably despise. It should be noted that pre-Pheidias sculpture was often richly coloured.

## ART (1500-1600)

power for their own sake, especially when manifested in the human body, which became a characteristic of Cinquecento art and is conspicuous in the one incomparably great sculptor of the Cinquecento.<sup>1</sup>

So much the greatest sculptor of his age is Michelangelo (to say nothing here of his greatness as painter, as architect, as poet, and as a man) that I shall first treat briefly a few of his contemporaries and then devote to him most of my space.

### (a) THE SANSOVINI

Andrea di Monte San Savino, generally known as the elder Sansovino (1460-1529), has been already mentioned as a sculptor who in Florence and Rome continued the elegant, elaborate, fashionable, monumental style of Mino of Fiesole, Desiderio of Settignano, and Benedetto of Maiano. And this style he degraded, for in many of his tombs (*e.g.* the Cardinal Sforza tomb in S. Maria del Popolo, Rome) we find the new fashion, so derided by Ruskin, of making the recumbent figure of the defunct lift its head, as if curious to view its surroundings, *facendo alla guancia della sua palma letto*, as says Dante—'with hand under cheek, as if the man had died of toothache,' as says our playwright Webster.

Jacopo Tatti (1486-1570), pupil of Andrea di Monte San Savino, adopted the current form of his master's birthplace and under the name Sansovino made himself famous as a really great architect, especially at Venice. Also as sculptor he produced much and won considerable renown, but most of his works are subordinated to architecture and seem to show a want of real genius for sculpture. Such are the well-known 'Giants'—Neptune and Mars—on the staircase of the Doges' Palace, and the bronze statues in St. Mark's, and those which survived the catastrophe of 1902 and still adorn his (reconstructed) Loggia at the base of the Campanile. In a

<sup>1</sup> In the Cinquecento, say Natali and Vitelli, the nude triumphs; its great sculpture is the glorification of the human body. In a fine sonnet to Vittoria Colonna, Michelangelo says God has not shown Himself anywhere more clearly than in the human form. His rather repulsive (originally) nude *Christ* in S. Maria sopra Minerva, Rome, illustrates this sentiment.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

Ghiberti-Michelangelesque style he was eminently successful with the bronze reliefs that he made for the doors of the Sacristy and for the choir of St. Mark's; and an undersized statue of Bacchus in yellow marble, which was made before he went to Venice and is now in the Florentine Bargello, has elicited very high praise from some writers.<sup>1</sup>

### (b) BENVENUTO CELLINI

The adventurous life and strange character of Benvenuto Cellini have been glanced at on a former occasion (pp. 466-8) and will be noted more fully in the chapter on Cinquecento writers. Here we have to do with him solely as a sculptor, and especially as the sculptor of the famous *Perseus* which until the late war always stood where he originally erected it, in the Loggia de' Lanzi. Of the very numerous works that he produced as *orafò* (goldsmith, or rather designer and worker in the more precious metals), such as cups, medallions, salt-cellars, helmets, etc. etc., have survived only a few cups, a salt-cellar, and the cover of a *Book of Hours*, although there are in museums many articles attributed to him. His extant sculptures (bronzes) are the rather tame *Ganymede* (Bargello), a *Christ* in the Escorial, a large bust of Grand Duke Cosimo (Bargello), a lanky and commonplace reclining *Nymph* (Louvre), and the *Perseus*, which was received with boundless applause by the artistic, literary, and fashionable classes of Florence—the new statue being covered, as was the custom of the day, with odes and sonnets in Greek and Latin and Italian. But amidst all this outburst of admiration there was some intelligent criticism. One quatrain that excited hilarity spoke justly of the *corpo di vecchio e gambe di fanciulla*; <sup>2</sup> and all who were even to a small extent imbued with the Greek spirit—

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Symonds calls it the most beautiful and spirited pagan statue of the Renaissance, and superior to the *Bacchus* of Michelangelo. Natali and Vitelli call it, rightly, *veramente ispirata e palpitante di vita*.

<sup>2</sup> 'Body of an old man and legs of a girl.' The bronze relief at the base of the statue (original in Bargello) representing the succour of Andromeda shows still more conspicuously very unattractive features of the same nature.



that is, the spirit of true sculpture—must have felt, as many feel in our day, almost as much repelled by the disgusting results of decapitation as Gentile Bellini doubtless was (if the story be true) when the Turkish Sultan gave him a lesson in realism by having a slave beheaded in his presence. Extracts from Cellini's own vivid account of the founding of his bronze *Perseus* will be given when we have to consider him as the writer of his celebrated Autobiography.

(c) GIAN DA BOLOGNA (1524-1608)

Jean Boulogne, better known as Gian da Bologna, was a native of Douai, but was educated at Florence, where he studied sculpture, becoming a great admirer of Michelangelo. He was employed by Duke Cosimo, and later by Cosimo's sons. About 1560 he went to Bologna. Here he erected a fountain surmounted by a heavy-limbed and pompous Neptune. After his return to Florence he produced his master-work—that bronze statue of Mercury which is perhaps more commonly known than any other work of sculpture in the world. The poise of the figure, although not true to nature (if we are to accept the testimony of instantaneous photography) is apparently so perfect that it excites universal admiration. The momentary pause is chosen between the transference of weight from one leg to the other—for the motion indicated is not that of flying, but of upward and onward movement caused by the foot's pressure on the pedestal of air. In the rather gloomy little room of the Florentine Bargello the statue loses much of the effect that it must have had (and which a copy has) in its original situation beneath the open sky in the garden of the Villa Medici at Rome. Two other works of his are to be seen in the Loggia de' Lanzi at Florence, the *Rape of a Sabine* and *Hercules slaying the Centaur Nessus*, both very vigorous and technically admirable, but not attractive otherwise. Admirable too is the equestrian statue of Duke Cosimo I in the great Piazza, on the pedestal of which are bronze reliefs of interest historically. Less admirable (say experts), but more impressive and of great interest,

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

is his last work, the equestrian statue of Duke Ferdinand I in the Piazza of SS. Annunziata (p. 496).

### (d) MICHELANGELO

Michelangelo Buonarroti was born (1475) not far from La Verna, that wondrously beautiful spot on a ridge of the Apennines 'twixt Tiber and the Arno' sacred to memories of St. Francis. As a child he came to Settignano, near Fiesole, and while still a boy was a pupil of Ghirlandaio in Florence, another of whose pupils, Granacci, became his special friend.<sup>1</sup> Having fallen out with Ghirlandaio he worked independently in the famous sculpture-garden of the Medici, to whom Granacci introduced him; and it is said that he gained the special favour of the Magnifico by his copy of a Faun's head,<sup>2</sup> to which he added much character by cleverly knocking out a tooth—an incident that apparently determined much of his future, for he became an inmate of the Medici Palace and an intimate associate of the artists and scholars who frequented the court of Lorenzo, among whom were Botticelli, Poliziano, and Pico, and with them he came under Savonarola's influence, which all his life long affected him strongly. Of this period there is an interesting relic in the Casa Buonarroti, Michelangelo's own house (now town property), where it has been since his death, namely a relief representing the battle of Centaurs and Lapithae—a somewhat crude but exceedingly spirited work showing the early tendency towards the counterpoise of violent forces. This relief was suggested to Michelangelo, it is said, by Poliziano.

Not long after the death of Lorenzo (1492), Michelangelo, evidently foreseeing trouble,<sup>3</sup> left Florence. During a stay at

<sup>1</sup> It was at this period that while working with other pupils at copying Masaccio's frescos in the Carmine church he was struck in the face by the big, bullying, odious, military-like Torrigiani so violently that, said Torrigiani to Benvenuto Cellini (*Vita*, I, xiii), 'I felt the bone and the cartilage of the nose give way under my fist as if it had been a wafer; and thus marked by me he will remain as long as he lives.'

<sup>2</sup> Now in the Bargello. Vasari asserts that Michelangelo had 'never before touched marble or chisels.'

<sup>3</sup> The foolish Piero, who was soon after expelled, although he employed Michelangelo in the selection of gems and knick-knacks, showed his character

## ART (1500-1600)

Bologna, where the powerful bas-reliefs of the *Creation* by Della Quercia strongly attracted him, he made one of the kneeling angels and the figure of S. Petronio which adorn the tomb of S. Domenico (*Medieval Italy*, p. xxv). On his return to Florence, about 1495, when Savonarola was becoming supreme, he carved a *Sleeping Cupid*, which was sold as an antique to a Roman cardinal, and it was to settle the dispute occasioned by this fraud that, on the invitation of the cardinal, he found his way to Rome—where he was to spend a great part of his life. During this first visit, which lasted from 1496 to 1501—i.e. during half the pontificate of the nefarious Alexander VI—he produced the *Bacchus* (now in the Bargello) and the *Pietà*, which is the only really great work of art in St. Peter's. In this very beautiful group, although the almost girlish face of the Mother and the heavy body of her Son may give us pause, most of us will recognize the first entirely satisfactory presentment of such a subject in real sculpture—for the works of Luca and Andrea della Robbia come under a different category. This *Pietà* is a realization in a form as perfect as that of the best Greek sculpture of what Christian sculpture had for more than a thousand years vainly attempted to express—emotions, beliefs, and aspirations of the human heart not dreamed of in Greek philosophy.

Soon after his return to Florence, in 1501, he probably produced the two circular bas-reliefs of the Madonna and Child one of which is in the Bargello and the other in London. In these well-known *Tondi* we have again the beauty and tender pathos which distinguish some of Michelangelo's earlier sculptures and offer such striking contrasts to the display of the power—the *terribilità*—of his later works.<sup>1</sup>

by forcing him to waste his time in making what Vasari describes as a *bellissima statua*—of snow!

<sup>1</sup> In these *Tondi* is to be noted that habit of leaving parts of a sculpture unfinished—with the *viva figura*, as he calls it in his sonnets, only half liberated from the marble—perhaps for fear of losing sight of the vision by attention to external detail. Or was it caused by mere impatience? The *Captives* (Accademia), the *Brutus* and the small *David* (Bargello), the *Pietà* in the Florentine Duomo, and the *Day* and *Twilight* (S. Lorenzo) are other examples.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

It is known to almost every one how Michelangelo undertook to make for the Florentine authorities a statue of David out of a block of marble which some ambitious sculptor had vainly attempted to use, and which for 30 years or so had lain neglected. In 1504 eighteen Florentine masters, commissioned to choose a site for *Il Gigante*, decided to leave the choice to the sculptor himself, and it was erected near the main portal of the Palazzo Vecchio. Thence, in 1873, it was removed to the Accademia.<sup>1</sup> The subject was prescribed: the youthful adversary of Goliath was to indicate the new Republic defying its enemies. The statue is undeniably of very noble proportions and gives the impression of immense self-restrained power; but does not this power suggest a young Samson or Hercules rather than a David divinely aided in his contests with brute force? Do not Donatello and Verrocchio satisfy us more?

After the completion of the *David* Michelangelo received from the Gonfaloniere Soderini the commission which resulted in the designing of the famous *Cartoon*, and at this period he produced also the chief of his rare easel-paintings, namely the *Holy Family* of the Uffizi and the *Deposition* of our National Gallery. In 1505 he was called to Rome by Julius II, who had conceived the idea of erecting to his own memory a colossal monument adorned with many large statues. This vast undertaking was entrusted to Michelangelo. The tomb as designed by him would have been the most stupendous in the world. Old St. Peter's was too small to contain it, so it was decided to build a new St. Peter's huge enough to serve as a canopy for such a mausoleum. But the building of the new basilica proved a very long affair, and the overwhelming task—the tragedy of his life, as he called it—which forced the sculptor to waste much of his energy in quarrying marble for this gigantic tomb, ended after 40 years in the creation of a monument of quite modest dimensions in the church of S. Pietro in Vincoli, adorned with

<sup>1</sup> A good copy has replaced it; and the statue in bronze looks down on Florence from near S. Miniato.





58. MOSES, BY MICHELANGELO



59. (a) GIULIANO DE' MEDICI



(b) LORENZO II DE' MEDICI

## ART (1500-1600)

one single statue wholly by the hand of the great master, namely, the *Moses* (Fig. 58).

The mutable, masterful, and disdainful conduct of the Pope so excited the somewhat irritable and proud artist that he suddenly left Rome, and it was not till three threatening papal briefs had been sent to the Florentine Signoria that he consented to reconciliation and joined the Pontiff at Bologna. Here he made a bronze statue of Julius which was erected over the portal of S. Petronio, where it remained only five years; for in 1511, when the French under Trivulzio and the gallant young Gaston de Foix took Bologna, it was melted down to make a cannon, derisively named *La Giulia*. When back in Rome the Pope—to whose imperious and capricious temper we may for this once perhaps be grateful—ordered Michelangelo to abandon sculpture and cover the roof of the Cappella Sistina with frescos. How this was accomplished is told elsewhere. Some five months after this gigantic task was completed Julius II died, and Giovanni de' Medici, who was elected as the new Pope (Leo X), sent Michelangelo to Florence to design and erect for S. Lorenzo a magnificent façade; but after he had wasted five years (1514-1519) in quarrying an immense amount of marble and transporting it from Carrara to Florence the idea of the façade was abandoned.<sup>1</sup>

At this time, it will be remembered, the Republic which had been resuscitated by Savonarola, and had continued to exist under the perpetual Gonfaloniere Soderini, had been abolished (1512) by the revival of the Medicean rule, the two brothers Giuliano (Duke of Nemours) and Giovanni having been installed in power. Giovanni was elected Pope in 1513. Giuliano resigned, and died in 1516, after which Lorenzo II, son of Piero the Unfortunate, ruled for three years—the three last years during which Michelangelo was toiling at the façade.

<sup>1</sup> S. Lorenzo—perhaps more fortunate than Sta Croce—is still without a marble façade. Michelangelo's first design is still to be seen in the Casa Buonarroti. About 1514 (before leaving Rome?) he began the nude *Christ* of S. Maria sopra Minerva. It was finished by assistants. Not only on account of its obtrusive nudity (which exists no longer) it is a most unattractive statue.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

Then Cardinal Giulio de' Medici—son of the Giuliano who was killed by the Pazzi conspirators—acquired the supreme power, and during the three years of his rule, before he was elected Pope in 1523, he supervised the building by Michelangelo of the magnificent New Sacristy of S. Lorenzo, which he meant to be the mausoleum of the Medici family.<sup>1</sup> Of the intended monuments Michelangelo produced during the next 10 years—evidently angered and depressed at thus having to glorify tyranny—the large unfinished figure of a Madonna under which the coffins of Lorenzo il Magnifico and his brother Giuliano rest, and the famous tombs of Giuliano (Duke of Nemours) and Lorenzo II, the statue above whose sarcophagus is generally known as *Il Penseroso*.<sup>2</sup> The gigantic reclining figures, usually named *Day*, *Night*, *Twilight*, and *Dawn*, are somewhat enigmatical. That they had some political significance seems probable from the well-known lines in which Michelangelo makes *Night* say that she is glad to be asleep and to be of stone while 'disaster and shame endure,' namely that caused by the re-establishment of tyranny in the person of the half-mulatto Alessandro—for fear of whom, perhaps, the sculptor left his great task unfinished and departed—perhaps fled—from Florence.<sup>3</sup>

Almost simultaneously with Michelangelo's arrival at Rome occurred the death of Clement VII. His successor, Paul III—of evil fame as Cardinal Alessandro Farnese—declaring that the *Moses* was quite enough of a monument to Julius, set the sculptor to work at the huge fresco of the *Last Judgment*, which occupied all his energies until the end of 1541. The remaining 22 years of his life, of which I shall have to speak when considering Michelangelo as architect and as poet, added little to his works as sculptor, the only sculpture of any

<sup>1</sup> During the next two years (1524-6) Michelangelo built also the fine Laurentian Library adjacent to S. Lorenzo.

<sup>2</sup> Neither of the two statues is a portrait. Doubtless the sculptor purposely avoided immortalizing these persons. See Fig. 59 and Notes, and 482 n.

<sup>3</sup> For the expulsion of the Medici after the sack of Rome (1527) and Michelangelo's activity during the subsequent siege of Florence (1530) see pp. 484-6. The death of his aged father in 1534 perhaps also induced him to leave.



## ART (1500-1600)

importance being that which, it is said, he intended to adorn his own tomb—a *Pietà* of four figures, in which the face of Nicodemus is thought to have been modelled from his own. Perhaps on account of the unfavourable position of this *Pietà*, behind the high altar of the octagon in the Florentine Duomo, it seems, in spite of Ruskin's eloquence, very seldom to make any deep impression on the spectator.<sup>1</sup>

## ARCHITECTURE

The great new Italian architecture of the Quattrocento, that initiated by Brunelleschi at Florence and that practised by Bramante during his Milanese period—that is, up to 1499—has been described in the last chapter on Art. The best of this Quattrocento architecture was a living growth which drew nutriment from the Romanesque (Lombard) and Gothic, and also from classical sources, but was, in the truest sense of the word, original, not directly imitating classical models nor slavishly subservient to classical principles as enunciated by Vitruvius, but endued with that exquisite sense of proportion and that noble self-restraint which are acquired by a sincere love for the finest Greek and Roman monuments.

In so far as the so-called 'classic' architecture of the High Renaissance (say 1500 to 1550) was a development from that of the preceding period it possessed vitality;<sup>2</sup> but it is

<sup>1</sup> In connexion with Michelangelo should be mentioned Bandinelli, his very bitter rival, whose exceedingly uncouth *Hercules and Cacus*, so disdainfully criticized by Benvenuto Cellini (II, lxx), is still allowed to stand near the copy of Michelangelo's *David* in front of the Palazzo Vecchio. Also his *Giovanni delle Bande Nere* is an eyesore in the Piazza S. Lorenzo. Another Florentine sculptor of this period was the architect Ammanati, whose huge *Neptune* in the Piazza presides over a group of bronzen Tritons and Nymphs (some by pupils of Gian da Bologna).

<sup>2</sup> Thus Bramante in his Roman style combines (*e.g.* in the cortile of the Palazzo della Cancelleria) the exquisite grace of Brunelleschi, or Fra Giocondo, or Laurana, with classic features. The relations to each other and to the whole of the various parts of the best High Renaissance buildings, and those of the various ornamental devices, are often very attractive (*e.g.* in Sansovino's Venetian work), and these relations are much aided by the divisions made by fine horizontal and vertical courses and by cornices. We get thus something at least deceptively like an organic creation.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

exteriorly characterized by much lifeless imitation and by the frequent misuse of certain striking features of classical architecture—especially the misuse of the column.

Putting aside theories as to the nature of decorative art, I think we may affirm that when, as often in later Gothic, decoration conceals constructive energy, architecture is the loser; and when that which is essentially constructive, and the significance of which consists in its energy, is used as inactive decoration, the loss is still greater. Now in Greek architecture columns supported the massive horizontal entablature and generally a roof, and the appeal that they make to our sense of beauty is like that made by a living, lithe or stalwart, human figure balancing on the head without undue effort a heavy weight. But when the Romans for their huge monuments and aqueducts and amphitheatres adopted arches, which in such cases were merely apertures in a massive wall separated by thick piers, the columns and architraves were often retained as survivals, almost useless except decoratively (as in the Arch of Titus), and sometimes, as in the Colosseum, we find rows of such arches flanked by useless pilasters and framed by decorative columns and architraves superimposed, storey above storey.<sup>1</sup>

In the architecture of the Cinquecento this use of the column and architrave is exceedingly common, and it is this that especially differentiates the later 'classical' style from that of Brunelleschi, where the arch is actually supported by the columns. The decorative use of columns, entablatures, pilasters, etc., was found to be a very easy method of producing an impressive effect—grandiosity, if not grandeur—such as was encouraged by ever-increasing wealth and luxury; but among the very numerous Cinquecento buildings of this cha-

<sup>1</sup> Although sometimes attractive by reason of beautiful proportions, the Pisan Romanesque, with its storeys of colonnades, seems somehow wrong in principle. Perhaps the most absurd misuse of such columns as are associated in our mind with a superincumbent architrave is that in which a solitary column, often of immense size, supports a comparatively small statue. Another absurdity is a twisted column, especially when it carries, or seems to carry, any great weight.

## ART (1500-1600)

racter there are some which through their noble proportions and the tasteful richness of their decoration make us forget to be critical, and win our sincere admiration—at all events as splendid framework and foreground, such as, according to Ruskin, Sansovino's and Scamozzi's magnificent piles, the Libreria Vecchia and the Procuratie Nuove at Venice, form for the picture of St. Mark's. Another weak point in many Italian Cinquecento buildings is that the models used were unfortunately not the fine columns of the three Greek orders such as were easily found in South Italy and Sicily (to say nothing of Athens, which until 1460 had remained the property, so to speak, of the Florentine family Acciaiuoli), but the debased Roman-Greek orders of Julius Caesar's military engineer, the writer Vitruvius.

The best church designers of the High Renaissance, it should be here remarked, seem to have gone rather to Byzantine than to Roman models, preferring the so-called Greek cross, with a great central dome, such as we find in Bramante's design for the new St. Peter's, the lineal ancestors of which are Sta Sophia, S. Vitale (Ravenna), and S. Maria del Fiore (the Florentine Duomo). Indeed, without the principles of the Byzantine dome-builders it would have been impossible to realize Michelangelo's conception of 'hanging the Pantheon in mid-heaven.'

Let us now glance at the foremost High Renaissance architects and their works at Rome (the chief centre of art during this period), and then turn to Venice.

### (a) ROME (1500-1564)

Bramante left Milan on the fall of Lodovico il Moro in 1499. His Milanese work has already been noticed, and the famous 'Tempietto' by which at Rome, in 1502, he is said to have initiated 'classical' Renaissance architecture. His other important buildings at Rome are, besides his work at the new St. Peter's (for which see p. 557 *n.*), the cloisters of S. Maria della Pace, the Cortile Belvedere in the Vatican, and the Palazzo della Cancelleria. A part of this palace was perhaps designed

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

and begun before Bramante's arrival (much of the material having been extracted from the Colosseum), but the façade, which is one of the simplest and noblest of High Renaissance erections, was most probably his work.<sup>1</sup> According to Vasari the buildings erected by Bramante were 'numberless,' but many of these were by his imitators.

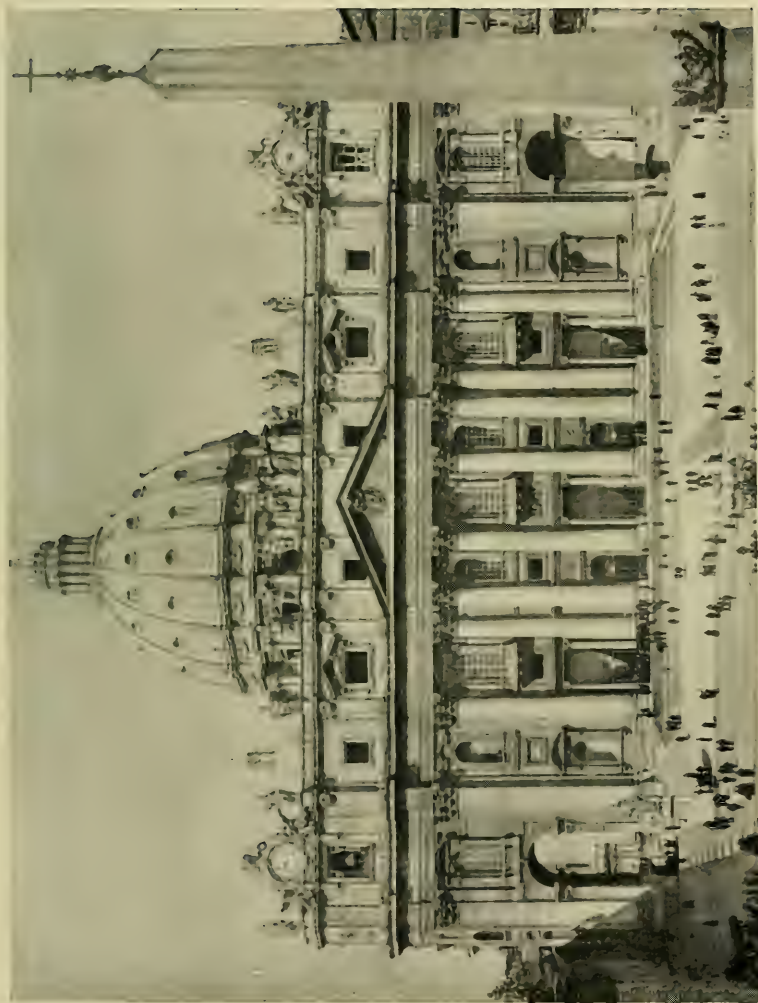
An assistant of Bramante's at Rome was Ant. Sangallo the younger (for the elder see p. 455). He is notable as the architect of the Farnese Palace. This building, since 1874 the residence of the French Ambassador, was begun by Alexander Farnese, who became Pope in 1534. After Sangallo's death in 1546 Michelangelo added the top storey and the magnificent cornice. The cortile is certainly fine, and the 'splendid monotony,' as it has been called, of the immense façade, with its three long rows of rectangular windows flanked by columns standing on brackets and surmounted by massive drip-stones, impresses one like some big stratified cliff.

Peruzzi of Siena (1481-1537) came to Rome in 1503 and became an assistant of Bramante's. His compatriot, the rich banker Agostino Chigi, commissioned him to build the Chigi Villa, now world-famous as the Farnesina, in the Trastevere, opposite the Farnese Palace. The style, light and elegant in comparison with that of Bramante and Sangallo, with its fine cornice and its graceful frieze, pierced with windows, is much admired. Another fine edifice of Peruzzi's in Rome, almost Greek in character, is the Palazzo Massimi delle Colonne (Corso Vitt. Emm.). On the death of Raphael (1520) Peruzzi was associated with Sangallo as architect of St. Peter's. Fine buildings by Peruzzi also exist at Bologna, Ferrara, and elsewhere, but his chief work lay at Rome, where he died, it is said, in great poverty. His tomb is beside Raphael's in the Pantheon.

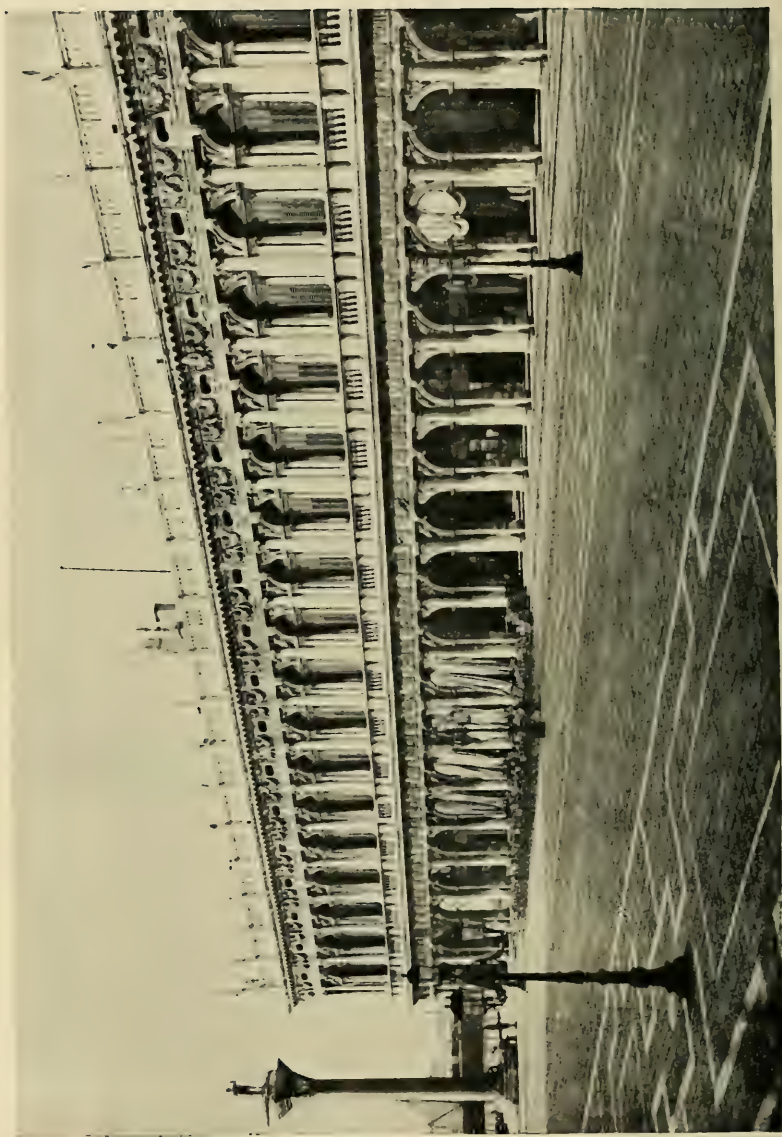
Raphael as architect is known especially in connexion with St. Peter's. In S. Maria del Popolo is an interesting work of his—a richly decorated domed chapel (Cappella Chigi) in

<sup>1</sup> Some confine his work to the cortile, which, though the columns are antique, reminds one of Brunelleschi and of Laurana's cortile at Urbino, Bramante's native town.





60 ST. PETER'S



61. LIBRERIA VECCHIA, VENICE

## ART (1500-1600)

the form of a Greek cross. At Florence the great Palazzo Pandolfini (now Nencini) was built from his designs.<sup>1</sup>

Michelangelo's greatest architectural work is, of course, the dome of St. Peter's, mainly built after his death by Vignola and Della Porta from his wooden model. Other important architectural works of his are the Laurentian Library, the New Sacristy, and the San Miniato fortifications at Florence. Then at Rome we have the reconstruction of the piazza of the Capitol, begun in 1538—in which year he transferred thither the celebrated equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius from the Lateran; and in the pontificate of Pius IV (about 1560) he transformed the huge remains of the Baths of Diocletian into a Carthusian monastery,<sup>2</sup> making the magnificent church of S. Maria degli Angeli out of the central hall (the Tepidarium). From his design the Porta Pia (near which in 1870 the Italian troops entered Rome through a breach) was constructed shortly after his death.<sup>3</sup>

### (b) NORTHERN ITALY, ESPECIALLY VENICE

Before considering Venice we should note Genoa—*la Superba*, as she is called on account of her Renaissance

<sup>1</sup> In connexion with Raphael should be mentioned his pupil Giulio Romano, who perhaps rebuilt the Palazzo Madama at Rome (so called from Margaret of Parma) and at Mantua erected and furnished with his wondrous frescos of Giants the famous Palazzo del Te.

<sup>2</sup> A part of this suppressed monastery is now the Museo Nazionale. The very spacious cloister has arcades reminding one of Brunelleschi.

<sup>3</sup> In connexion with Rome should be given a fairly full account of the building of the new St. Peter's, but I must limit myself to a few facts. The first to whom Julius II entrusted the work was Bramante, whose design was that of a Greek cross with a great dome. The foundation-stone was laid on April 18, 1506. On Bramante's death (1514) Giuliano da Sangallo, Fra Giocondo, and Raphael were appointed the architects, and after them Antonio Sangallo and Peruzzi, and then (1546-1564) Michelangelo. Many changes were made, some of these architects being strongly in favour of prolonging the church into the form of a Latin cross. Michelangelo restored Bramante's design, but wished to add a great portico on the principal (east) front. His plans and his model for the huge dome were followed by Vignola and Della Porta. But the Borghese Pope, Paul V, about 1606, took the unfortunate decision to convert the design into that of a long Latin cross, and had the huge barocco façade erected by Carlo Maderna which entirely ruins the view of Michelangelo's dome from the Piazza.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

palaces. Some of these palaces are impressive, but most of them are architecturally very inferior to those of Rome and Venice. The best were designed by Alessi, a pupil of Michelangelo. The one really fine, but over-decorated and somewhat rococo, Genoese church of this era is the late Cinquecento SS. Annunziata, built (1587) by that Della Porta who at Rome was associated with Vignola in building Michelangelo's mighty dome and also the church Il Gesù, which, as we shall see, was the first important specimen of the degraded barocco or rococo style.

A native of Verona, Sanmicheli, should here be mentioned. He was especially great at fortification, and was thus employed not only at Verona—where his Porta del Palio and Porta Nuova are handsome and solid constructions—but also at Venice, and in Corfu, Crete, and Cyprus. His palaces, *e.g.* Pompei and Bevilacqua at Verona, show but little sense of proportion or beauty of line. The well-known Palazzo Grimani, on the Grand Canal at Venice, which was probably designed by him, is more successful.<sup>1</sup>

We now come to the three great masters of Venetian Cinquecento architecture, namely Jacopo Sansovino, whom we know already as sculptor, Palladio, and Scamozzi.

Jacopo Sansovino was a Florentine. It is said that he left Florence for Rome when the erection of the S. Lorenzo façade, for which he was a competitor, was given to Michelangelo. At Rome he became a zealous student of classical architecture, both ancient and later. When, in 1527, Rome was besieged, he fled to Venice, and here he won a great reputation and was evidently much respected—although Benvenuto Cellini, for reasons of his own, describes him as a swaggering braggart. His chief works at Venice were the Palazzo Cornaro della Cà Grande, the massive but by no means attractive Zecca (Mint), the Loggetta at the foot of the Campanile (crushed by its fall

<sup>1</sup> Ruskin indeed, though a hostile critic, states that 'there is not an erring line, not a mistaken proportion throughout its noble front'; but an ordinary observer will perhaps feel, when comparing the Grimani with other fine Venetian palaces, that the single balcony is a fatal error.



## ART (1500-1600)

in 1902 but reconstructed), and the grand Libreria Vecchia, which forms all the west side of the Piazzetta, and which, if we regard it not as an independent work of art but as a piece of magnificent architectural framework which might be continued *ad libitum*, is certainly very impressive. The Doric arcade of the lower storey possesses much beauty of line and proportion and much dignity and nobility; the upper (Ionic) storey, although splendid, is somewhat heavy and is overladen with the very wide, rich and massive entablature—in the midst of which, by the way, it is interesting to notice Peruzzi's device of inserting windows.

The most important successor to Sansovino at Venice was Palladio (1518-1580). To him was due the great superiority of Venetian over Roman architecture in the latter half of the Cinquecento, and the warding off for a time from a part of Northern Italy of the baneful barocco style. Vicenza, Palladio's birthplace, has especially the honour of having resisted this pernicious influence. Here when only 31 years of age he built the very fine Renaissance arcades (the Basilica Palladiana) round the Gothic town-hall. At Venice Palladio's finest work is the poet Byron's favourite Chiesa del Redentore, which has a very dignified front upraised above a grand flight of stairs. The interior is simple and striking with its great columns, producing 'an effect like that of solemn music with rich, full chords.'<sup>1</sup> A not uncommon characteristic of Palladio's work is the use of large and lofty columns that serve for two or three storeys instead of the usual superimposed orders. A most remarkable example of this is afforded by the strange Casa del Diavolo at Vicenza. In this city we have also Palladio's last work, finished after his death—the Teatro Olimpico—which in its false windows, used for internal decoration and serving as niches for statues, shows very perceptibly the baneful influence of the now rapidly spreading barocco style.

<sup>1</sup> See Anderson's *Italian Renaissance Architecture*. Palladio's design for S. Giorgio Maggiore was carried out by Scamozzi. The Palladian style became very fashionable in England, where it was introduced by Inigo Jones in the reign of James I.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

A notable follower of Palladio at Venice was Giovanni da Ponte, who constructed the Rialto Bridge, and the Prisons connected with the Doges' Palace by the Bridge of Sighs (built by Contino about 1600). A more widely known follower, or rather emulous imitator, of Palladio was Scamozzi, also a native of Vicenza, whose Procuratie Nuove form the south side of the great Piazza, opposite the Procuratie Vecchie (built a century earlier by Pietro Lombardo). In this magnificent array of arches and columns the two lower storeys (Doric and Ionic) are copied from Sansovino's Libreria and are topped by a third storey with Corinthian columns and square window-doors surmounted with heavy Roman drip-stones on which (as on Michelangelo's Sacristy tombs) nude figures perilously recline.

### (c). THE DECLINE

We have now reached the end of the great architecture of the Renaissance, which at Venice had lasted longer than elsewhere. The decline which had begun in Rome before the death of Michelangelo, and which undoubtedly he himself had helped to initiate, was mainly due to fatal paralysis of that faculty which perceives what in art is essential for beauty and grandeur. The vital and organic form which proves that a building is an artistic creation was no longer recognized as essential. Slavish subservience to the rules of Vitruvius as regards details of parts, without due regard for the relation of these parts to each other and to the whole (*e.g.* meticulous regard for the proportions of a column with no regard to its true function or to its relation to the entablature—as we see in Sansovino's Libreria), caused in time the total neglect of constructive beauty and the senseless use as 'decorative scenery'—even inside a building—of such things as false or perfectly objectless windows, niches, panels, balustrades, etc., from the mere dread of unbroken wall-surface. 'Ornament,' well says Mr. Anderson, 'was constructed for its own sake.' For the sake of what was admired as 'ornament' horrors of all kinds were perpetrated; what constructively should have

560

## A R T (1500-1600)

been straight was made curved or twisted, what should have been solid and steadfast was set in violent motion, what had constructive work to do was attenuated or entirely concealed, while that which was functionally otiose was bombastically exaggerated and turbulently flaunted. The most monstrous displays of this rococo, or barocco, style, which reached a climax about the time of Bernini (17th century), are to be seen in hundreds and hundreds of Italian churches which excite the admiration and reverence of the average native.

Michelangelo, in his New Sacristy, was one of the first to neglect constructive beauty and to introduce senseless 'scenery' in the form of false windows, panels, etc., but the chief culprit was probably Barozzi, called Vignola from his birthplace near Modena. He has been already mentioned in connexion with Michelangelo's great dome. He lived mostly at Rome. About 1552, with the help of Michelangelo and the doubtful assistance of Vasari, he built for Julius III the graceful Villa Giulia (now a museum) outside the Porta del Popolo. But he soon developed evil tendencies. In 1568 he and Della Porta<sup>1</sup> built the church called the Gesù at Rome, the burial-place of Ignatius Loyola, the façade of which is badly imitated from Alberti, while the richly decorated interior is the prototype of countless specimens of the so-called 'Jesuitic' style—a style especially favoured by the Jesuits, who disseminated this disgrace to European art through many pagan lands. It is a curious fact that while still occupied with the Gesù Vignola was capable of constructing the not undignified church of S. Maria degli Angeli at Assisi—the vast receptacle in which is preserved St. Francis' little chapel of the Portiuncula.

Finally we should not leave unnoticed Vasari as an architect, for the building of the Florentine Uffizi redounds more to his credit than does anything he ever painted.

## CHAPTER VI

### LITERATURE (1500-1600)

AS on former occasions, I shall here touch briefly on the main literary features of the century, and then select a few prominent writers for fuller consideration.

Firstly, let us note an important external characteristic. Italian literature of the High Renaissance differs from that of preceding centuries in using a language which may perhaps be called national; for in spite of the fact that Italy was sinking ever deeper into the slough of barbarian domination, and had apparently lost all hope of political union, the *volgare* had now won its place as a kind of national literary language, Latin having withdrawn from the contest into academic groves and into haunts obscene. But among the champions of the *volgare* it was still fiercely debated of what elements the national literary language should consist. It will be remembered that Dante in his *De vulgari Eloquentia* theorized on this subject and in his Poem left a splendid specimen of that 'noble and courtly idiom' which he so earnestly advocated.<sup>1</sup> Many now, including Machiavelli, influenced by the *Dialogues on the Vulgar Tongue* of a Venetian writer, Cardinal Bembo, well known as a friend of Raphael,<sup>2</sup> contended that Dante's Florentine *volgare*, as amplified and refined by Petrarca and Boccaccio, should be accepted as the literary Italian; but others—among them Castiglione, who frequently used his native 'Lombardisms'—asserted that a broader and more national basis should be sought. In this combat Bembo and his

<sup>1</sup> See *Medieval Italy*, p. 543.

<sup>2</sup> Bembo, though as zealous an advocate of the *volgare* as Dante or Alberti, was also a fine scholar and writer of Ciceronian Latin. See p. 544 for Raphael's epitaph.



## LITERATURE (1500-1600)

followers—the 'Purists'—may perhaps be said to have remained victors.

Secondly, although Cinquecento literature was the fruit of a long period of very industrious cultivation, and although it can show some works of impressive bulk, some of unquestionable literary merit, and some of very considerable value for the historian and biographer, it seems to have been estimated for more than two centuries far too highly. When in reference to this literature one talks about a 'Golden Age' it may well be asked what was produced in this period that for great literary qualities can be set on at all the same level as the works of Homer or Dante, or any of the first-rate products of the Golden Ages of Pericles, Augustus, and Elizabeth. Surely we can feel no doubt on this point after reading a few pages of the *Orlando Furioso*, or of the *Gerusalemme*, and then a few of the *Paradiso* or *Iliad* or *Odyssey* or *Aeneid*; or after turning for an hour from the perusal of Machiavelli's or Guicciardini's *Histories* to those of Thucydides or Tacitus; and as for the Drama—what have we to set against the works of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Aristophanes, Plautus, and Shakespeare, except Terentian imitations by Ariosto, or Trissino's dull *Sofonisba* (famous as the first of modern tragedies, according to Manzoni, and the first specimen of blank verse), and the foul-mouthed Aretino's play of *Orazia*,<sup>1</sup> and the nasty *Mandragora* ('Mandrake') of Machiavelli, and the indecent farce of *Calandria* by Cardinal Dovizi of Bibbiena? And what are Vasari's *Lives* compared with those of Plutarch? And where is to be found one lyric of any real feeling or beauty? And what are Tasso's *Aminta* and Guarini's *Pastor Fido*, or any of their countless imitations, in comparison with the *Eclogues* and *Georgics* of Virgil and the *Idylls* of Theocritus? And,

<sup>1</sup> Pietro Aretino, *i.e.* of Arezzo, a prolific, trenchant, coarse-minded writer, was for years at the papal court of Leo X and Clement VII. Here he made bitter enemies and took refuge at Venice. His six volumes of *Letters* hold up a mirror to all that is most vulgar and vicious in Cinquecento society and to the odiously brutal, licentious, and venomous nature of the writer. His outer man is wondrously mirrored in his portrait by Tiziano (in the Pitti)—richly robed in brown velvet, with large coarse features and a great black beard.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

lastly, who of the innumerable imitators of Petrarca produced anything of value? The only Cinquecento sonnets that possess any value are those of Michelangelo, which although the products of a very great and earnest and original mind can hardly claim to possess the attributes of great poetry. In regard to the endless story-telling of Ariosto and Tasso, and also, I suppose, of Pulci, Boiardo, Berni, and many others, Alfieri used to say that the Italian Muses in this age indulged too much in old wives' tales—'chattered too much' (*chiacchieravano troppo*)—and he was surely right. Who is there amongst us who ever turns to these interminable story-tellers for anything but a little literary or linguistic self-improvement? When we are in an epic mood do we not find in the *Odyssey*, or even in the *Nibelungenlied*, a satisfaction infinitely greater than that offered by the *Orlandos* or by the *Gerusalemme Liberata*?

The writers of this century whose works I select for somewhat fuller, though necessarily brief, comment are: Machiavelli (1469-1527), Ariosto (1474-1533), Michelangelo (1475-1564), Castiglione (1478-1529), Guicciardini (1483-1540), Bandello (c. 1485-1562), Berni (1497-1535), Benvenuto Cellini (1500-1571), and Torquato Tasso (1544-1595).

### (I) MACHIAVELLI (1469-1527)

The chief facts of Machiavelli's life, as far as it was connected with public events, have been stated in former chapters. It will be remembered that in 1498, soon after the martyrdom of Savonarola, of whom he writes somewhat sarcastically, he was elected Secretary of State. During some 14 years he was much employed as foreign envoy by the Republic, mostly under the rule of the perpetual Gonfaloniere, Soderini, until in 1512 the Sacred League, founded by Julius II, broke the power of the French in North Italy and caused the return of the Medici and the establishment in power of Giuliano (Duke of Nemours) and his brother, Cardinal Giovanni—next year elected Pope. A probably unfounded accusation of complicity in a plot to eject these princes resulted in Machiavelli's being

## LITERATURE (1500-1600)

imprisoned and, possibly, tortured. On being released he retired to his villa and *podere* near Florence and devoted himself to study and writing. Two of his most important works, the *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Livy* and *Il Principe*, were both probably composed, or begun, in this year (1513). The *Principe* he meant to dedicate to Giuliano, Duke of Nemours, but this prince died in 1516, and it was dedicated to his nephew and successor, the frivolous Lorenzo II. It seems natural to suppose that this dedication proves that Machiavelli was currying favour with those whom he had professed to regard as odious tyrants—and by whose orders he had been imprisoned and perhaps tortured. But the enigma of his character and that of *Il Principe* are apparently insoluble. It seems that he did receive some small offices by favour of Lorenzo, and that when after the sack of Rome, and the renewed expulsion of the Medici (1527), he hastened to Florence in evident hope of re-election as Secretary to the re-established Republic he was treated with, perhaps justifiable, suspicion and neglect. In June of the same year he died. His *Istorie fiorentine* were composed between 1521 and 1527. Their chief merit is that of lucid order and general luminosity. They are full of sage reflexions, and are sometimes highly extolled as the first serious attempt at 'scientific history'—the evolution of events being traced from what are presumed to be their causes, their nature being thoroughly examined, and their consequences prognosticated but too scant attention being sometimes paid to the incalculable influences of human free will.

The ethical questions suggested by *Il Principe* make this Essay for us nowadays perhaps the most interesting thing produced by Italian Cinquecento literature. I shall therefore give a short abstract of its contents and add a few comments.

Machiavelli first considers, giving many illustrations from Greek, Roman, French, and Italian history, the various kinds of *Principati* (despotisms)—namely hereditary, acquired, and mixed, 'leaving aside,' he says, 'the discussion of Republics, seeing that I have spoken at length of these elsewhere,' *i.e.* in

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

his *Discorsi* on the first ten books of Livy. He then begins to deduce his maxims. Despotic sovereignty over a state may be acquired by luck, or by war, or by crime. When such a state has hitherto been free, especially if the people are not of one's own nationality, there are only three methods of retaining it in one's power: one may make it tributary and set up an oligarchy devoted to oneself, or one may reside in it and rule it oneself, or one may utterly ruin it. Of these methods the only safe one, he says, is the last; 'for he who becomes master of a state accustomed to liberty and does not destroy it must expect to be destroyed by it.' Moreover, when sovereignty has been acquired by a crime it is necessary to secure one's power by cruelty. Now cruelty may be well used or badly. If it is well used, the necessity for using it decreases and in time ceases; if badly, the necessity increases, and one is infallibly ruined. So it is best 'to get through all one's cruelties in as short time as possible—*far tutte le crudeltà in un tratto.*'

Then he considers a *principato civile*—a 'constitutional despotism,' so to speak—such as that of the earlier Medici—'gained by favour of the people, or of the nobles, and by means of successful astuteness.' As a general rule one should play off people against nobles and nobles against people; but if one has gained power by the people it is best to hold fast to its friendship even when using the nobles to limit its demands; and if one owes one's power to the nobles 'the one thing before all others that must be done is to try to gain the favour of the people.' These and other such maxims he supports by the most astute arguments and many illustrations.

Then follow several chapters on military affairs. He argues that a strong army is necessary for the despot, but he condemns mercenaries and foreign *condottieri*, the use of which, as Petrarca too had lamented, proved so fatal to Italy. (It will be remembered how zealous Machiavelli was in instituting a Florentine militia to take the place of mercenaries.) Then he proceeds to examine the qualities 'by which men, and especially princes, are praised or blamed.' Many, he says, have

566



## LITERATURE (1500-1600)

written about model states and abstract Justice, but his object is entirely practical—viz. to show ‘to him who understands’ what qualities it is useful, or the reverse, for a despot to affect. It is better, he opines, to be miserly and despised than too liberal and hated for extortion; it is ‘much safer to be feared than to be loved’; it is doubtless theoretically admirable to be honest and to keep faith, ‘but nevertheless one has learnt from the experiences of our age that those princes have accomplished great things who have held their word in little account.’ Chiron the Centaur, half man and half beast, was a great teacher. We must learn to use both parts of our nature—the lion and the fox. Those who depend entirely on the lion do not understand the matter. ‘A prudent ruler can not and should not observe his promise when such observance is to his disadvantage, and the reasons no longer exist which caused him to make the promise. . . . Nor did a prince ever lack legitimate reasons to give colour to such non-observance. Of this innumerable modern examples could be given.’ But one’s foxish nature must be cleverly disguised; one must be *gran simulatore e dissimulatore*, like Pope Alexander VI; such qualities as humanity, honour, piety, honesty, etc., are dangerous when they really exist and are used too much, but it is often wise to affect them, and one should be ever ready to trim to every change of wind (*volgersi secondo che i venti . . . comandano*). There follows much more in the same strain. Then the Essay concludes with a chapter in a different key—a rather fine *Esortazione a liberare l’Italia dai barbari*. A great opportunity, he says, has presented itself for a Deliverer to come, such as Dante and Petrarca longed for; and, addressing himself to Giuliano or to Lorenzo, he assures him that all Italy is looking to the illustrious house of the Medici, favourites of God and of the Church and of Fortune. God, he declares, does not want to do everything. He looks to human free will and wishes to leave a little glory also to *you*. This barbarian domination stinks in the nostrils of every one. Up! seize the sword and fulfil the prophecy of Petrarca that ‘Heroism shall take up arms against barbaric

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

fury, and the contest shall be brief ; for in Italic hearts ancient valour is not yet extinct.'

I can but mention a few of the guesses made by those who have tried to solve the enigma of *Il Principe*. According to the best authorities, and among them Professor Villari, whose three-volume monograph on Machiavelli combines great erudition with a most admirable lucidity and reasonableness, there are, on the supposition that the Essay was not merely a rhetorical exercise in sophistry,<sup>1</sup> three possible explanations. Firstly, the object of these Mephistophelean counsels and arguments thrust upon the young Medici princes may have been to induce them to commit acts that would lead to their overthrow. Secondly, the object of the book may have been to reveal to the Florentine people the real nature of despotism. Thirdly, Machiavelli's experiences may have led him to despair of republics (of which, as we have seen in a former chapter, he speaks disrespectfully enough in his *Istorie fiorentine*), and his appeal to the young Medici to come forward as the Saviours of Italy may have been perfectly sincere. He may have really believed in the possible attainment of that sovereignty which during the pontificate of the Medicean Pope, Leo X, seemed almost within the grasp of the Medicean princes, and which many hoped might lead to the unification of Italy. This explanation is certainly consistent with all that Machiavelli says, especially with his final chapter ; so perhaps the object proposed was practically the same as that of Garibaldi and Mazzini. The question is whether such an end justified the means proposed by Machiavelli, and whether his counsels were seriously meant, or whether he was acting up to his own advice to be *gran simulatore e dissimulatore*. His friendship with and admiration for Cesare Borgia would seem to show that he believed in a science of government entirely emancipated from the laws of morality and humanity—and

<sup>1</sup> His letter to his friend Vettori, written December 10, 1513, shortly after finishing the Essay, seems to prove that it had a serious practical object. He appeals to his experience of 14 years as State secretary and envoy at foreign courts, 'which time I did not pass in sleeping or playing,' and, like Socrates, he appeals to his great poverty as a proof of his honesty and sincerity.

## LITERATURE (1500-1600)

it is as discoverer of this emancipation that he wins the applause of some modern writers. 'In our opinion,' writes Professor Doctor Karl Vossler of Heidelberg, 'it is just this that constitutes Machiavelli's title to fame. Was it his fault that posterity once more confused Morality and Politics after he with the dissecting-knife of his logic had separated them and had recognized the right of Might—intellectual and material—as the one principle for the ruler?' But not only Germans pay homage to a writer who seems to approve their disdain of 'scraps of paper' and their treatment of Belgium. I find also an Italian—the editor of *Il Principe* in the popular *Biblioteca Classica Economica*—working himself up to such an ecstasy of adoration for Machiavelli, and such a pitch of indignation against his detractors, that he ends his tirade with these words: *non posso astenermi dal professare a lui un culto quasi divino*.<sup>1</sup>

Although Machiavelli calls on his country to expel the barbarians, he greatly admired Germany for its organization and military power. He tells us that the cities of Germany under the rule of their Emperor were *liberissime*, and recommends them as a model to the Florentines. In his *Della natura dei Francesi* he accuses the French of being vain, fickle, servile in bad fortune, insolent in good. In spite of his travels he evidently saw nothing below the surface, and his ideas about German character were strongly influenced by the *Germania* of Tacitus and books descriptive of the Tirolese and Swiss. In military matters his *Arte della Guerra* (finished in 1520) showed him to be a mere theorist—and as such he was, it is said, on one occasion pitilessly ridiculed by Giovanni delle Bande Nere.

### (2) ARIOSTO (1474-1533)

Older works of literature and art may be valuable to us for the ethical, the intellectual, and the aesthetic influences

<sup>1</sup> Macaulay, in his famous Essay, seems to offer the excuse that Machiavelli's morality was simply that of his age; and he lauds him as the discoverer of a new political science of government founded on history and experience.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

that they still exercise, or merely because they reflect the modes of thought, the language, the tastes, the manners, and the customs of a past age. The poems of Ariosto have doubtless some value for the second of these reasons, and on this account will probably continue to be read by students, but the popularity long enjoyed by his *Orlando Furioso*, as by Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato* and its *rifacimento* by Berni—and perhaps we may add Tasso's *Jerusalem*—has entirely ceased, doubtless for ever, and what the poem reflects of the thought, the politics, or the social customs of its age is not of a nature to demand consideration from our present point of view. I shall therefore not attempt to guide my reader across the expanses of this immense and wearisome Carlovingian epic of about 37,000 lines—say three times as many as the *Odyssey* contains. The object of Ariosto—one which was fully in accord with his character and his life—was, as D'Ancona and Bacci say, 'merely to offer the reader, or the listener, a pleasure purely aesthetic.' Pleasure however is interrupted here and there by violent invectives against the cowardice and callousness with which Italians were submitting to slavery, or by moralizings and philosophizings inserted by way of contrast to passages of considerable obscenity, or by somewhat servile adulation of the house of Este. The main theme is a fanciful continuation of Boiardo's story of Orlando (Roland) and other paladins of Charles the Great, very richly embellished by innumerable appendages of chivalric, amorous, magical, and Jack-the-Giant-killer character. Amidst all this extravagant and rather childish story-telling one finds a number of vigorously drawn and delicately finished portraits, such as those of the fair Angelica, of the sorceress Alcina, of Orlando himself, and of Ruggiero. The development of Orlando's madness is represented with a skill almost Shakespearean. But what seems to have exercised the strongest attraction was the easy eloquence, the fluent rhythm, the facile rimes, and the vividness and sprightliness (*giocondità*) of the style—so different from the somewhat solemn tone of Tasso's poem. It has well been called 'the smile of Italy.'



## LITERATURE (1500-1600)

Ariosto was born (1474) at Reggio, in Emilia. His father, Count Niccolò Ariosto, was captain of the citadel in that city, which was subject to the Duke of Ferrara, Ercole I, father of Isabella and Beatrice d'Este and of Duke Alfonso I, the employer and patron of the poet. The facts of Ariosto's life are related in his *Satires*. His tastes were Horatian. He disliked official work and was able to spend the last six years of his life (1527-1533) in happy possession of a little house and garden, now the property of the city of Ferrara. His *Orlando* was first published in 1516. In 1521 a second edition appeared with 6 additional cantos, making 46 in all. He then spent 10 years in revision and republished the poem in its present form in 1532, not long before his death.

### (3) MICHELANGELO BUONARROTI (1475-1564)

#### A MICHELANGELO

*Si come lo scultore con la forza  
Del suo martello dalla cruda scorza  
Del marmo libera la forma viva  
Di bella Donna, Eroe, o Dio, o Diva,  
E nella pietra rude, alpestra, dura  
Discernon gli occhi nostri rimirando  
A poco a poco tutta la figura ;  
Così la nostra mente meditando  
A poco a poco dentro nell' abbozzo  
De' tuoi versi, marmo rude e rozzo,  
S'accorge d'una vita che si cela ;  
Poi, come Galatea al suo amante,  
A noi la viva forma si rivela—  
La forma d'un pensiero bello e grande.*

In not a few of his madrigals and sonnets Michelangelo tells us that within the rough block of marble chosen by the sculptor there exists a 'living form' which with his chisel and hammer he has to liberate. In the rough sonnet given above I have applied this idea to his poems. At first they may repel us by their rugged exterior, but if we are patient we shall find that many of them contain very noble and very beautiful thoughts, expressed in sculpturesque rather than poetic form, which will live in the memory, ennobling and strengthening

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

our character. Michelangelo's poems<sup>1</sup> consist of about a hundred madrigals of various length and some 77 sonnets, mostly of one admirable form. Almost all that are of real value were written for or concerning Vittoria Colonna, widow of a Marquis of Pescara, whom he met about 1538, and who died in 1547, when he was 72 years old. The poet's 'love of love' that Michelangelo felt for Vittoria certainly brought him much unrest and misery. The friendship was of the most beautiful nature, inspired and nourished by the communion of two minds aglow with enthusiasm for great thoughts; but on his side at least there was no dissimulation of a love which exceeded the bounds of ordinary friendship and which she apparently did not reciprocate. However, as we see from his poems, he gloried in battling against passion and attained through suffering a higher happiness and a still deeper love for her who caused his suffering. Some of the pieces written after her death are in tenderness and elevation of thought, though not, of course, in poetic conception and beauty of form, comparable with the later poems of the *Vita Nuova*, and are in a tone far nobler and more manly than anything written by Petrarca after the death of Laura. As it is the underlying thought rather than the form that is valuable in Michelangelo's poems, I shall not take the liberty of borrowing any of Mr. Symonds's elegant verse paraphrases, but shall merely mention and illustrate by quotation some of the most interesting of the *Madrigali* and *Sonetti*.

Some of the poems in which he uses the idea of the statue lying hid in the rough marble are *Madrigal XII* and *Sonnets XIV* and *XV*, all three addressed to Vittoria Colonna. 'As by removing the external envelopment,' he says, 'the sculptor reveals within the rough marble [*in pietra alpestra e dura*] a living form, which grows more and more distinct where the stone is more and more cut away, so canst thou, lady, liberate me from the rough external parts of my nature and reveal

<sup>1</sup> Hardly known until 1863 except in the miserable version published (1623) by his conceited nephew, who 'improved' the text audaciously to suit the taste of his contemporaries.



62. MICHELANGELO BUONARROTI



63. ELISABETTA GONZAGA



## LITERATURE (1500-1600)

my real self ; for I myself have neither the will nor the strength to do so.' 'I am,' he says in *Sonnet XIV*, 'merely such a model as a sculptor makes of common material—a model for thee, lady, to fashion into something more perfect and to remove my rough exterior with thy loving sympathy, even while thou dost punish and teach me penitence for my audacity.' And again: 'Not even the best artist has any conception which is not contained within the exterior crust of every single block of marble ; and at this [hidden form] arrives the hand that obeys the mind [of the sculptor]. Within thy heart, lady, are both felicity and death, and my weak skill, however much it dares, can draw forth nought but death.'

Amidst not a few rather frigid conceits there are many fine thoughts about life and death and eternity and victory over destiny. Thus, 'For the pilgrim soul there is more salvation in knowing how to lose much than how to gain a little,' and

*Fa vita e grazia la disgrazia mia.*

And again :

*Mia poca grazia m'è dolce e cara,  
Chè assai acquista chi perdendo impara.*

We find also Platonic conceptions, such as that of transmigration and of the union of two souls, or of the two halves of a soul. He expresses finely love's sudden and complete victory in the words *Sol d'un sguardo fui prigioniero e preda . . . nè più vi vidi ch'una volta sola . . . il ciel non è dove non siete voi*. He speaks of bearing the image of his lady's face impressed on his memory so that 'in storm or in calm secure with this sign, as with that of the Cross, the soul goes forth against its adversaries.'

The last 30 madrigals contain many dignified thoughts on old age and death, and some of the later sonnets are very beautiful, humble, and tender communings of a noble human soul with the world of spirits. Doubtless some will feel that as death approached this faithful disciple of Savonarola was perhaps too grievously oppressed by the consciousness of his own unworthiness, and of the futility of all that he had done

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

as artist. Ariosto's line *Michel più che mortale, angel divino*, is stupid flattery, but there can be no doubt that, as well as being one of the greatest of sculptors and of painters and of architects, Michelangelo was, to judge from his poems, his letters, and his life, also a man of lofty intellect and rare nobility of character. And as regards his merits as poet critics may differ, but Berni was right when in four lines sent to Sebastiano del Piombo—which may be freely rendered as below—he contrasted the affected and empty verbiage of the Petrarchists with the virile and earnest verse of Michelangelo :

He's our Apelles, and Apollo too !  
Silence, ye 'violets of pallid hue,'  
Ye 'crystal founts,' ye 'agile beasts and birds' !  
He talks of *things*, ye only chatter *words*.

I append, with diffidence, my version of the well-known *Sonnet LXV*—addressed by Michelangelo, in his 79th year, to his friend, the artist and biographer Vasari.

Life's voyage draweth now toward its end ;  
My fragile bark across the stormy flood  
Hath neared the haven whither all must wend  
To answer for their actions ill and good.  
Ah, now I see what fond and foolish mood  
To Art, my queen and idol, made me bend,  
How guides like these to mortal error tend,  
What baneful thing a man may crave for food.  
And all those thoughts of love, so sweet and vain,  
What fate is theirs, if twice to die be mine ?  
(One death is sure ; the other much I dread.)  
Painting and sculpture ne'er can give again  
Peace to the soul that turns where Love divine,  
To clasp us, on the cross His arms outspread.

### (4) BALDASSARE CASTIGLIONE (1478-1529)

The *Cortegiano* of Castiglione is a book that almost every one knows, at least by name. During the Cinquecento more than 40 Italian editions and numerous translations were published, among which Sir Thomas Hoby's English version had great popularity in Elizabethan days. It was put on the Index in Spain and in Italy, but an expurgated edition was permitted,

## LITERATURE (1500-1600)

all that was to the discredit of ecclesiastics being excised, including a good deal of a frivolous nature that is put into the mouths of Bembo and Dovizi of Bibbiena—both of whom later became cardinals.

Michelangelo's verse, whether or not it reaches accomplishment as 'poetry,' has that greatness of aim without which no literature is great. The *Cortegiano* possesses no essential of great literature; but it is nevertheless brightly written and still fairly readable—though it becomes very wearisome if read continuously—and for the student it is useful, seeing that round it, as also round Castiglione's life, are grouped not a few interesting personalities. It moreover gives us a picture of Italian Cinquecento 'high life' which, although evidently a good deal idealized as regards coarseness and libertinism, displays ingenuously and in vivid colours the contemptible, if less repulsive, fopperies and affectations of 'society' in that age. The framework of the book has some faint resemblance to that of the *Decameron*, but seems rather to have been suggested by Plato's *Dialogues*, to which several allusions are made. In the discourse with which Bembo regales his audience on the nature of beauty and love one notes a distinct, but superficial, imitation of the *Phaedrus*, and of Diotima's discourse in the *Symposion*, as well as reminiscences of Dante and Lucretius; but inspiration and dignity are entirely absent, and, in spite of much talk about the soul, the unpleasant impression is left of an erudite ecclesiastic dallying with sensuality as he cracks jokes on the 'Psychology of Kissing.'

I shall say a few words about the scene of *Il Cortegiano* and some of its characters and give a short sketch of Castiglione's life; then I shall briefly indicate the contents of the book.

'The little city of Urbino, as every one knows,' says Castiglione, 'lies nearly in the middle of Italy, where the Apennines slope down towards the Adriatic.' It has been mentioned in connexion with Raphael and Bramante and the Dalmatian Laurana, who built the celebrated palace for Frederic of Montefeltro. The Montefeltri were lords of

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

Urbino even before the time of Dante,<sup>1</sup> and in 1474 the famous Federigo, whom we know already as a great *condottiere* and a great patron of learning and the founder of a fine library, after marrying his daughter to Giovanni della Rovere, nephew of Pope Sixtus IV, received the ducal title.<sup>2</sup> His son, the gouty but amiable Guidobaldo,<sup>3</sup> married Elisabetta Gonzaga, sister of that Gian Francesco, Marquis of Mantua, whom we know already so well as the husband of Isabella d'Este and the, not very trustworthy, leader of the League forces against Charles VIII.

A fine portrait of Elisabetta Gonzaga, Duchess of Urbino, perhaps by Mantegna, is one of the treasures of the 'Tribuna' (Fig. 63). In it those who are familiar with Northern Germany cannot well fail to recognize Teutonic features and a genuine Prussian *Hochmut* and sourness. The fact is that both her grandmother and her mother were German—the former indeed was a Hohenzollern.<sup>4</sup> But according to Castiglione and other courtiers she was a paragon of virtue, amiability, and intellectuality.

Guidobaldo had succeeded his father, Duke Federigo, in 1482, and had married Elisabetta Gonzaga in 1488. In 1502 he was expelled from Urbino by Cesare Borgia and retired to Mantua, and thence, persecuted by the Pope, withdrew to Venice; but in the next year, on the death of Pope Alexander

<sup>1</sup> See the story of Buonconte of Montefeltro in *Purg.* v, and *Inf.* xx, 27, 67.

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 281, 370, Table X, Fig. 39. Frederic's literary tastes were probably due to his education in the *Casa Gioiosa* (see p. 371).

<sup>3</sup> Castiglione says he was 'of spirit most unconquerable,' although tormented by gout and ever foiled by fortune. A striking portrait of him in the Pitti shows the same pallor as that of Pietro il Gottoso.

<sup>4</sup> From her was doubtless derived the Hohenzollern tendency to hump-back (*Buckel*) which was observable in several of the Gonzaga. Elisabetta's brother, Gian Francesco, husband of Isabella d'Este, though 'active and soldierlike, was underset and showed this tendency. Isabella's devotion to him during the campaign against Charles VIII and the battle of Fornovo had been very touching, but his Teuton blood ere long showed itself: he took a mistress, and Isabella, who was his senior by ten years, became the object of general pity. I fear it must be allowed that many proofs of her hard and grasping nature (so different from that of her sister Beatrice) are extant, a fact that somewhat dims her lustre as 'the Lady of the Renaissance.' She survived Francesco twenty years.



## LITERATURE (1500-1600)

VI and the fall of Cesare, he returned to Urbino, welcomed with enthusiasm and tears of joy, men, women, and children dancing and waving olive-branches before him when he entered the city, as was done at the triumphal return of King David, 'so that,' says Castiglione, 'the very stones seemed to rejoice and sing for gladness.' He forthwith gathered again to his court most of the scholars and artists who had fled at the advent of the Borgia, and ere long he was summoned to Rome and made Gonfaloniere of the Church by Pope Julius II, to whom he was related by the marriage of his sister to Giovanni della Rovere.

It was at Rome, in 1504, that Castiglione, who through his mother was a relative of the Gonzagas and had served under Gian Francesco until his defeat by the French on the Garigliano in 1503, joined the retinue of Guidobaldo and Elisabetta. In 1506 Guidobaldo was made Knight of the Garter by Henry VII, and Castiglione was sent to England with gifts for our King, among which gifts was (see p. 539) a *St. George* painted by Raphael. Then, in the autumn of 1506, Pope Julius II, on his expedition against Bologna, visited Urbino (where Raphael probably first made his acquaintance), and on his return he again broke his journey at the court of Guidobaldo, remaining two days (March 3-5, 1507).

It was on March 5, after the departure Romewards of Julius II—some of whose retinue prolonged their stay at Urbino—that, according to Castiglione, the first of the evening meetings described in the *Cortegiano* took place.<sup>1</sup> They were held, after supper, in the room of Duchess Elisabetta, the invalid Duke having retired early to bed. The task of describing the perfect courtier, or gentleman, was first given to Count Lodovico of Canossa, later Bishop of Bayeux. Other speakers were Ottaviano Fregoso and his brother Federigo, later Archbishop of Salerno; Bernardo Dovizi of Bibbiena, later cardinal and well known through Raphael's portrait;

<sup>1</sup> Castiglione himself takes no part, and leads us to suppose that he was still in England. But, as 'Julia Cartwright' shows in her exhaustive *Life of Castiglione*, this was a 'graceful fiction' to account for his silence, seeing that he returned to Urbino on the last day of February, and in a letter says 'we have had the Pope here for two days.'

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

Pietro Bembo, also later made cardinal, known to us already as scholar and the writer of Raphael's epitaph; and Giuliano de' Medici, who with his brothers Piero the Unfortunate and Cardinal Giovanni (Leo X) was at this time an exile, but five years later, after being made Duc de Nemours by King Louis, was recalled to Florence as supreme ruler together with Giovanni, and is well known to the art-enthusiast on account of his tomb, adorned with the *Day* and *Night* of Michelangelo. Besides these were Gaspar Pallavicino and several other men, as well as Duchess Elisabetta, her friend and connexion Emilia Pia, and other ladies.<sup>1</sup>

Castiglione tells us that he conceived the idea of the *Cortegiano* shortly after the death of Duke Guidobaldo, in 1508, and that he wrote it 'in a few days,' evidently meaning merely the first rough sketch; for he adds that for many years he could not find the time to work it up. The proem of the 4th book, in which he tells us of the death, or the changed fortunes, of many of the persons above mentioned—and of the accession of the new Duke, Francesco Maria, and the new Duchess, Eleonora, daughter of Isabella d'Este of Mantua—must have been written, as is plain from what he says about Giuliano de' Medici, early in 1515. Some years later (he says in his prefatory letter to the Spanish Bishop de Silva) he discovered to his great distress that a lady to whom he had lent the manuscript had allowed portions to be copied, which copies were being circulated in Naples.

This lady was none other than the Marchioness of Pescara—that Vittoria Colonna who some 10 years later, when a widow, became Michelangelo's intimate friend and inspired most of his poems. She offered an *amende honorable* and was forgiven; but Count Castiglione now determined to revise and partly rewrite the book. The new manuscript—now a treasure of the Laurentian Library at Florence—was written by a scribe at

<sup>1</sup> Many years later the Bishop of Bayeux, on revisiting Urbino, found Emilia Pia, now an old lady, living in loneliness amidst memories of the past, and tried to console her by reading aloud certain parts of the *Cortegiano*; but while he was reading she suddenly died. The Church was scandalized that she died fortified by such episcopal consolations.

## LITERATURE (1500-1600)

Rome and was signed by Castiglione on May 23, 1524. It was taken by him to Spain, whither he was sent by Clement VII as papal nuncio to the court of the Emperor Charles,<sup>1</sup> and, after being prepared for printing, it was sent to the Aldine Press at Venice and published in 1528. In the next year Castiglione died at Toledo.

The *Cortegiano* opens with a few words about Urbino, Duke Federico, his son Guidobaldo, the Duchess Elisabetta, and the numerous persons who took part in the evening meetings. It is told how various 'games' were tried—themes being proposed for discussion, such as 'What special virtue and defect would you prefer in your beloved?' and 'As every one has a germ of madness, in what special way, or with regard to what special subject, would you probably be considered mad by your acquaintances?' Then, after a deal of elegant trifling,<sup>2</sup> the subject of the Perfect Courtier is proposed, and this, amidst many digressions, remains the main theme during the four evenings of the discussion. I can but give a few disconnected specimens to show the general tone and character of this discussion, without making any attempt to follow the drift of the arguments, which certainly tend to nothing worth serious consideration.

Firstly then, asserts the first speaker, our Courtier should be nobly born; and, in spite of objections, it is agreed that a well-born person has the great advantage of being regarded as a gentleman until he misbehaves. Such first impressions are very favourable to his development as a *perfetto Cortegiano*. Secondly, he should be a soldier, for the profession of arms, even though he should not be an expert in military science, gives him a distinguished air and puts him on his honour. It is true that some army men are rough in manner, and when

<sup>1</sup> He arrived at Madrid not long before the battle of Pavia, and was there on the arrival of King Francis I as prisoner; and while preparing his book he received the distressing news of the sack of Rome.

<sup>2</sup> The jester and *improvvisatore* l'Unico Aretino proposes that all shall try to guess what that S means which the Duchess bears on her forehead—whether 'Siren' or a 'poisonous reptile of sandy Libya' (evidently the Scorpion of the portrait, Fig. 63). He then recites a sonnet on the subject.



## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

asked to dance or listen to music reply that 'such stuff and nonsense [*così fatte novelluzze*] has nothing to do with their profession.' This leads to the consideration of *conceit*, which is distinguished from self-knowledge and self-respect. Then grace of manner and handsomeness of person are touched upon, and Monsignor Bernardo Dovizi (known better by his later title of Cardinal Bibbiena, and dubbed by his contemporaries in his younger days with the name *il bel Bernardo*) remarks: 'As for myself, I feel convinced that I possess gracefulness and an exceedingly handsome face—and that is why so many ladies, as you know, are passionately in love with me; but as to the contours of my body I am a good deal in doubt, especially those of my legs, which really do not seem to me to be so well designed as I should wish'; and he begs information as to the bodily outlines necessary for the Perfect Courtier. Then they pass to duelling, which is approved of as a gentlemanly accomplishment, an adjunct to swimming, leaping, running, throwing stones (putting the stone?), playing ball (*pallone*?), riding, leaping into the saddle, etc. etc. The question of *grazia* is again touched upon, seeing that 'the Courtier must accompany every act and movement with gracefulness, without which all else is of little value.' Grace, it is decided, is a natural gift, not to be acquired; but it can be much improved by watching and selecting. It must, however, be entirely devoid of affectation, in the same way as true art conceals its art; for genuine grace is a totally different thing from a pish imitation of the manners of the great—'such imitation as we have seen in a certain friend of ours, who fancied himself very like Ferrantino of Aragon [Naples], but concentrated all his efforts on imitating an infirmity that the King had contracted of constantly lifting his head and twisting aside a part of his mouth.'

A graceful negligence (*sprezzatura*) is to be cultivated by our Courtier in dress, in habits,<sup>1</sup> and in language, which should

<sup>1</sup> The habit is ridiculed—a habit very common in Germany among officers and *Stutzer*—of 'carrying a little mirror and a comb' and using them in the presence of strangers. Toothpicks are not mentioned.





61. CASTIGLIONE



65. TASSO

## LITERATURE (1500-1600)

be refined—‘like that of good writers’—but should avoid all affectation of old and learned words. He must also eschew the affectations of travelled fools, ‘who, if they have been abroad a year, all at once begin talking Roman, or Spanish, or French.’ This leads to a long digression on the uses of Latin and the *volgare* (Tuscan and Lombard) and other literary questions; then music is discussed, some holding it an effeminate accomplishment, others insisting, with appeals to Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, that the Courtier should be expert with various instruments; then, with references to Raphael and Michelangelo, the nature and possibilities of painting and sculpture are discussed, somewhat superficially.

The second book opens with the author’s reflexions on old age. He pours ridicule on old *laudatores temporis acti* who are so wise in all other respects but so foolish in not perceiving the superiority of the present. His *discorso*, as he calls it, is evidently suggested by Cicero’s famous treatise, but differs widely from it in adopting a tone of sarcasm and in ignoring all the nobler possibilities of later years. It is interesting to note the self-satisfied assertion that ‘all we see nowadays in literature, painting, sculpture, architecture, and everything else proves that the men of genius in former ages were generally greatly our inferiors.’ On the second evening it is decided that, although the intelligent Courtier will generally know how and when to show off his accomplishments, it is best to furnish him with a few general rules, so that he may not make inept or bumptious remarks and may reflect beforehand where and before whom he is speaking or acting. He must be careful to avoid ‘shop’—especially military ‘shop’ before ladies and civilians; he must be most careful not to demean himself before his ‘inferiors,’ *e.g.* by dancing at country festivals, or by playing ball or wrestling or leaping or racing in competition with bumpkins—unless indeed he is quite sure of beating them—‘because it is really too unseemly a thing and fatal to one’s dignity for a gentleman to be seen beaten by a peasant, especially at wrestling.’ Of course he may indulge such tastes *in private*, as a certain young cardinal used to do, begging

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

people to come into his garden to try to beat him at jumping. And, as regards music, he should always prefer the solo, or recitation *alla viola*—choosing well his audience. An old Courtier singing would be a ridiculous sight. Then—an assumed gravity in the case of younger men pays well: it credits one with wisdom and strength of character. But it is impossible to give rules for all cases; much must be left to our Courtier's good sense. He must not be a bungling flatterer, but while avoiding boorishness and brag must be respectful towards his Signor and others of his superiors, and not behave as if he were their equal; he must accept favours gratefully but with feigned reluctance, and *never* ask for them.

Then we come to the Courtier's dress and the cut of his beard—and here there are interesting remarks on the fashions of the period. 'In Italy,' says the speaker, 'there are infinite varieties, some dressing themselves *alla Francese*, some *alla Spagnuola*, some wishing to pass as German; nay, there are even some who dress after the fashion of the Turks; but Italy has no dress, such as it used to have, which may be recognized as Italian.' Of less importance, seemingly, is the Courtier's choice of friends. The advice is utilitarian, the main objects being advantage and advancement, and the chief rule resembling the adage always to treat a friend as if he may some day be your enemy. Then, amidst much wearisome repetition of similar counsels in multifarious forms and with many illustrations and digressions—in regard to the art of conversation, the choice of games (chess being tabooed as too difficult, and making one a mere chess-specialist), behaviour towards ladies, the avoidance of conceit and of treating people 'as if not capable of comprehending the profundity of one's knowledge,' the affectation of ignorance, the silliness of depreciating your special *forte* and trying to do that for which you have no gift, the danger of foolish joking and the impossibility of acquiring real humour if not innate, and so on and so on—we reach the third and fourth evenings and find (to omit much else) an elaborate description of the Perfect Lady Courtier,

582



## LITERATURE (1500-1600)

a 'Lady who would deserve to be Queen of the world,' which description involves a great deal about female character. Then comes a picture of 'The Good Prince' and a very superficial analysis of the nature of princely and republican government, the palm, of course, being given to the former, seeing that most men are by nature slavish and need to be ruled, while the more virile and intelligent are quite satisfied by being allowed to support the authority of their lord and master. Then, finally, we arrive at Monsignor Bembo's discourse on Beauty and Love and the 'Psychology of Kissing,' which has been already mentioned and needs no further comment.

### (5) GUICCIARDINI (1483-1540); BANDELLO AND BERNI

Guicciardini's *Storia d'Italia* and *Storia Fiorentina* have been drawn upon and cited so much in this book that any long description of these works would be superfluous. It will suffice here to note that he was a friend of Machiavelli's and that his *History of Italy* commences where Machiavelli's work leaves off (1492) and extends to the death of Clement VII (1534). The *lucidus ordo* in which he presents to us the very tangled subject of the political history of Italy during this period is most admirable, and in impartiality and acumen he certainly excels Machiavelli. As contemporaries of Guicciardini may here be mentioned Bandello, who as a youth was at the court of Lodovico of Milan, then was Dominican friar, then a great wanderer, then long attached to the court of Francesco and Isabella of Mantua, till (perhaps as Bishop of Agen in France) he was able to devote his last years to the publication of the 214 Stories (*Novelle*) which he had written in the course of his long life. Among these stories is one (of Norman origin?) from which Shakespeare, perhaps through an English poem, derived much for his *Romeo and Juliet*; but these names seem to have been first given to the lovers by a certain Da Porto of Vicenza, a soldier friend of Bandello's. The version by Bandello of the story of *Ugo and Parisina* (well known through Byron's poem) was dedicated to Castiglione.

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

Another writer of the same period is the well-known Berni, whose chief work we have already noted—the *rifacimento* of Boiardo's great poem, with autobiographic additions, including his experiences during the siege of Rome in 1527. His *Rime*, with their parodies and outrageous burlesques of what is great and beautiful, gave to this class of verse the epithet 'Bernesque.' Berni is said to have been poisoned by Cardinal Cibo because he refused to poison another cardinal.

### (6) BENVENUTO CELLINI (1500-1571)

I have had occasion to speak of Cellini as artist and have noted his experiences, real and fictitious, at the siege of Rome. The exceedingly lively, loosely written autobiography of this clever, impetuous, audacious personage—whom we may without any hesitation call a liar, and who by his own admission committed several murders—is of no importance as great literature (though deemed by Goethe worthy of translation) and is mainly useful for the records of his relations, already noted in a former chapter, with Florentine artists and with Duke Cosimo and his Duchess. I shall therefore here limit myself to translating a part of the well-known passage in which he describes the founding of his *Perseus*.

He describes how he made the wax model, and how he answered the assertion of the Duke that to cast the figure in bronze was impossible; how he then set to work, finished his special furnace, made the mould and placed it beneath the smelting-pot, which was filled with many chunks of copper, bronze, and alloy, and was connected with the mould by channels that could be closed and opened. Unluckily all these efforts brought on a serious attack of fever, and after having already lit his fire he had to take to bed. Obtrusive visitors then came in and assured him that the thing was an impossibility and that the metal was already getting spoilt and not liquefying. This roused him. He sent to a neighbour for several hundredweight of well-dried young oak-wood, and the molten mass began to clarify and flash, the heat being something terrific. 'Now when they saw that the brew [*migliaccio*]

## LITERATURE (1500-1600)

was beginning to clarify all the crew obeyed my orders with such zeal that every one worked like three. Then I got them to fetch half a "loaf" of tin, weighing about 60 pounds, and I cast it into the brew, which, helped by the fuel and other means, and by being stirred up with iron bars and poles, in a short time became liquid. Now when I saw that I had raised the dead, against the belief of those ignorant fellows, such vigour returned to me that I was no longer aware of having fever or any fear of death. But all of a sudden there was a crash and a mighty flash, just as if a thunderbolt had been discharged in our very presence, so that by the extraordinary and fearful shock every one was quite dazed, and I more than any other. When the great noise and light had ceased we began to gaze at each other, and we perceived that the cover of the furnace had burst and was lifted up in such a way that the bronze was overflowing. Then hastily I had the mouths [apertures] of my mould opened, and when I saw that the metal did not run with requisite ease, having recognized the probable cause to be that the alloy had been consumed by reason of the terrible heat, I sent for all my tin [and pewter ?] plates and dishes and trays, which numbered about 300, and threw them one by one in front of the channels, and a part I threw into the pot. Thereupon, when every one saw that my metal had become beautifully liquid and that my mould was filling, they all gladly and heartily helped and obeyed, while I gave my orders, now here now there, and lent a hand, and kept exclaiming, "O God, Who with Thine infinite powers didst raise [Thyself] from the dead and gloriously didst ascend into heaven . . ." so that all of a sudden my mould was full; for which reason I threw myself on my knees and thanked God, and then turned to a plate of salad that was there on a bench, and with great appetite I ate and drank together with all that crew; and then, it being two hours before dawn, I went to bed feeling very well and joyous, and lay myself to sleep so sweetly as if I had never known any misfortune in my life.'

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

### (7) TORQUATO TASSO (1544-1595)

Between Benvenuto Cellini and Tasso should be mentioned once more Vasari, whom we already know as an indifferent painter, a successful architect, and, by reason of his *Lives* of Italian artists, a very useful if not always trustworthy biographer. Also Guarini is noticeable. His life (1538-1612) more than covered that of Tasso, whose competitor he was both in poetry and in love. He was a man of much more vigorous character than his rival—a professor at the University of Ferrara, his native city, and later a political envoy and ambassador of that Alfonso II of Este whom we know so well in connexion with the sad story of Tasso's life. Guarini's only noticeable work is a *tragicommedia pastorale* named the *Pastor Fido*, evidently suggested by the performance at Ferrara (1573) of Tasso's *Aminta*. Its vivacity, picturesqueness, and classical grace (not to mention its covert sensuality and its occasional vulgarity—traits absent from the nobler spirit of Tasso's poem) made it perhaps the most popular of all the innumerable pastorals which owed their existence to the *Aminta*; and for a considerable period it held the field even against the influence of the *Gerusalemme Liberata*; but compared with Virgil's exquisite *Eclogues* the amorous pipings of Guarini's shepherds and his descriptions of the Golden Age are very worthless tinsel.

The facts of Tasso's melancholy life are sufficiently known to almost everybody who takes any interest in literature, although the facts are often interwoven with a good deal of fiction in the minds of those whose knowledge of the subject is based on *Childe Harold* or Goethe's play, the one so full of Byronic sentimentality and the other of Germanic *Schwärmerei*. Undeniably Tasso's life was pitifully sad on account of his exceedingly excitable, morbid, and impetuous nature, and it is difficult to regard without indignation the conduct of Alfonso of Este<sup>1</sup> in confining the distracted poet during

<sup>1</sup> Alfonso II, the last of the legitimate Estensi (1558-1597). His grandfather, Alfonso I, was Ariosto's patron. Ferrara was annexed to the Papal States by Clement VIII in 1597.



## LITERATURE (1500-1600)

7 years (and for some time *a catena*—i.e. fettered) in a lunatic asylum. It is impossible here to describe his wanderings and flights from city to city, his passionate quarrels, his morbid self-accusations of heresy, the sufferings caused by the pangs of unreturned affection and the hostility of academic pedants—all which gloom was only faintly illuminated by his love for his sister Cornelia. At Rome, while awaiting the promised coronation on the Capitol with the laurel wreath, he died (April 1595) in the convent of S. Onofrio, well known to those who have climbed the northern slope of the Gianicolo and have seen the venerable lightning-scarred relics of the oak under which, it is said, the poet of the *Gerusalemme* was often wont to sit gazing down on the Eternal City.

The pastoral play *Aminta* was written during the spring of 1573, after Tasso had been working about 8 years at his great Epic, which was finished in 1575, and first printed, without the consent of the author, in 1580. Attempts had already been made by Beccari in his *Sacrificio*, and by several other writers, to dramatize the dialogue of such pastoral poetry as that written by Theocritus, Bion, and Virgil, and at Ferrara several of these plays had been already put on the stage—in the same fashion as Milton's *Arcades* and *Comus* were produced some century later. Tasso's story is simple, but decidedly dramatic. The shepherd Aminta loves vainly Silvia, shepherdess and huntress, devotee of Diana. Her a satyr seizes and binds to a tree. She is saved and released by Aminta, but flees from him and, meeting a lion, like Thisbe, drops her mantle, which the monster with bloody mouth befouls. The mantle is brought to Aminta, who, believing his beloved dead, is on the point of throwing himself over a precipice when Silvia appears and, overcome by his devotion, declares her love. The play was (like *Comus*) rendered attractive by music and by beautiful scenery. It achieved great success in the theatres and at the principal courts of Italy. To the modern reader who has any taste for graceful, rhythmic dialogue, musical lyrics, and a picturesque background to a somewhat slight and fantastic little idyll, the poem may

## ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

pleasurably fill a few leisure hours ; and, as it is Tasso's *lyrical* genius that gives real value to his long Epic, one gets from this little poem perhaps more of what he has to give us than we can obtain from a perusal of the *Gerusalemme*, seeing that lyrical genius finds far freer play in this pastoral idyll of his than amidst the pomp and circumstance of war and chivalry and the amours of high-born knights and ladies—or even amidst the delicately painted crafty fascinations of the siren and witch Armida and her final submission to the all-conquering might of love—or, rather, to the chivalrous generosity of her faithful lover Rinaldo.

The subject of the First Crusade—the liberation of Jerusalem and the establishment of Godfrey as its first Christian king—was suggested to Tasso while still a youth by the alarming conquests of the Turks and their not infrequent descents on the Italian coasts—during one of which his sister Cornelia, who was living at his birthplace, Sorrento, had a very narrow escape from capture. It is interesting to note that when he was about half through the poem the celebrated battle of Lepanto took place (1571), which for a time crippled the Turkish sea-power.

The action of this long heroic poem, of about 2000 stanzas in *ottava rima*, is fairly continuous, but it is much interrupted by digressions and side-episodes. These are not nearly such suffocating parasitic growths as those of the two *Orlandos* ; they would nevertheless disturb very considerably our interest in the climax towards which the poem is supposed to tend if any such interest were aroused in the reader's mind ; but, although the subject was for the reader or auditor of Tasso's day of far deeper interest than the half-fabulous *Gestes de Charlemagne*, the modern reader cannot be expected to share this interest, and whatever attraction the poem still exercises is through its graceful style and pellucid language, and that lyric quality which we have noted.<sup>1</sup> Ariosto's

<sup>1</sup> It would be useless here to discuss the changes made by Tasso in the revised version of his poem, which he called *La Gerusalemme Conquistata*. They were occasioned by hostile, pedantic and fanatic, criticism and seriously affected the poetic worth of the Epic.

## LITERATURE (1500-1600)

*Orlando* has been called 'the smile of Italy in the morning of the Cinquecento.' Tasso's *Gerusalemme*, on the contrary, may be said to represent without a smile—without one single attempt at humour—the general state of feeling in Italy after the fall of political liberty and the advent of the Counter-Reformation.

## DATES OF SOME OUTSTANDING EVENTS OF THE THREE CENTURIES

*(For Monarchs, Kings, Doges, Popes, Signori, Italian Artists and  
Writers see Lists and Tables)*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>1265-1321. Dante.<br/>c. 1295-1447. Visconti lords of Milan.<br/>1309. Papal seat removed to Avignon<br/>by Clement V.<br/>1315. Battle of Montecatini.<br/>1322. Battle of Mühldorf.<br/>1325. Battle of Altopascio.<br/>1327-9. Descent of Ludwig the Ba-<br/>varian.<br/>1329-36. Florence acquires Pistoia<br/>and Arezzo.<br/>[1340-1400. Chaucer.]<br/>1341. Petrarca crowned on the Capitol<br/>1346. Battle of Crécy.<br/>1347. Cola di Rienzo Tribune.<br/>1354. Cola di Rienzo killed.<br/>1354-5. Descent of Charles IV<br/>(France).<br/>1354. Turks first set foot in Europe.<br/>1356. Battle of Poitiers.<br/>1356-61. Papal State reconquered by<br/>Albornoz.<br/>1360. Peace of Brétigny.<br/>1364-5. Crete rebels and is recon-<br/>quered by Venice.<br/>1367-70. Urban V attempts vainly to<br/>re-establish papal seat at Rome.<br/>1379-81. War of Chioggia.<br/>1377. Gregory XI ends 'Babylonish<br/>Captivity.'<br/>1378. Ciompi Riot.<br/>1378-1417. The Great Schism.<br/>1414-18. Council of Constanz.<br/>1415. John Huss burnt.<br/>1415. Battle of Agincourt.<br/>1431. Joan of Arc burnt.<br/>1433. Council of Basel refuses dis-<br/>missal.<br/>1433-4. Cosimo exiled.<br/>1439. Council of Florence.<br/>1442. Alfonso of Aragon takes Naples.<br/>1447-50. 'Ambrosian Republic'<br/>(Milan).<br/>1450-1500. Sforza Dukes of Milan.<br/>1453. Turks take Constantinople.</p> | <p>1455. League of Lodi.<br/>1469-92. Lorenzo il Magnifico.<br/>1474-1516. Ferdinand (and Isabella)<br/>of Spain.<br/>1489. Caterina Cornaro cedes Cyprus<br/>to Venice.<br/>1492. Fall of Granada. Discovery by<br/>Columbus of America.<br/>1494-5. Descent of Charles VIII.<br/>1494. Piero II (Medici) expelled.<br/>1494-1512. Republic at Florence.<br/>1498. Martyrdom of Savonarola.<br/>1500. Capture and banishment of<br/>Lodovico il Moro (Milan).<br/>1501. End of Aragonese dynasty at<br/>Naples; the Two Sicilies come<br/>under Spanish rule.<br/>1508. League of Cambrai against<br/>Venice.<br/>[1509-47. Henry VIII of England.]<br/>1512. Battle of Ravenna.<br/>1512-27. Medici again at Florence.<br/>1519-56. Charles V (<i>Emp.</i>).<br/>1525. Battle of Pavia.<br/>1527. Sack of Rome.<br/>1527-30. Republic again at Florence.<br/>1529. Peace of Cambrai.<br/>1529-30. Siege of Florence.<br/>1530-1737. Medici again rule Flo-<br/>rence.<br/>1532-5. Turks invade Hungary and<br/>Austria.<br/>1535. Sforza dynasty ends with Fran-<br/>cesco II and Milanese Duchy appro-<br/>priated by Charles V.<br/>1545-63. Council of Trent.<br/>1556-98. Philip II of Spain.<br/>[1558-1603. Elizabeth of England.]<br/>[1564-1616. Shakespeare.]<br/>1571. Cyprus taken by the Turks.<br/>1571. Battle of Lepanto.<br/>1572. Massacre of St. Bartholomew's<br/>Day.<br/>[1587. Mary Stuart executed.]<br/>1588. The 'Invincible Armada.'</p> |
|---|--|



# LISTS

## (I) 'HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE'

1300-1600

### **Albert of Habsburg** ('King of the Romans')

Murdered by his nephew, John the Parricide, 1308.

### **Henry VII of Luxemburg, 1308-13**

### **Ludwig (Louis) the Bavarian**

Beats Frederick of Austria at Mühldorf, 1322.

Crowned Emperor at Rome by Sciarra Colonna, 1328.

[King John of Bohemia, son of Henry VII, in Italy, 1330; killed at Crécy, 1346.]

Dies, October 1347.

### **Charles IV (of Luxemburg)**

Son of King John of Bohemia and grandson of Henry VII.

Elected 'King of Romans' (July 1346) one month before his father's death and 15 months before the death of Ludwig.

Receives Cola di Rienzo at Prag, but hands him over to Pope Clement VII at Avignon, 1350-1.

First descent and coronation at Milan with Iron Crown, 1354.

Coronation at Rome by Archbp. of Ostia, 1355; allowed by Pope Innocent VI (Avignon) to stay only one night at Rome.

Publishes the 'Golden Bull,' 1356.

Visits Pope Urban V at Avignon, 1365.

Second descent (against Visconti), 1368-9.

Dies, 1378.

### **Wenzel (Wenceslaus), son of Charles IV**

At Prag sells Dukedom of Milan to G. Galeazzo Visconti, thus renouncing Italy.

Battle of Sempach, 1386.

Deposed, 1400.

### **Ruprecht (Rupert or Robert)**

Count Palatine, 1400-10.

### **Sigismund, 1410-37**

First descent, 1413.

Second descent and coronation at Rome, 1431-2.

### **Albert II, 1438-39**

### **Frederick III, 1439-93**

Coronation at Rome, 1452. 'For the last time the Romans saw a Pope crown an Augustus in St. Peter's' (Greg.).

### **Maximilian I, 1493-1519**

His son Philip *m.* Princess Joanna (the Mad) of Spain, and their son is Charles V (*Quint*).

Allies with Ferdinand of Spain and Louis XII, 1508.

Ally of Naples against the French in Italy, 1572.

The 'Theses' of Martin Luther, 1517.

### **Charles V, 1519-56**

Diet of Worms, 1521.

Captures Francis I at Pavia, 1525.

His brother, Ferdinand of Austria, inherits Hungary and Bohemia, 1526.

Crowned 'Emperor of the Romans' at Bologna, 1530.

Abdicates, 1556, leaving Spain to his son Philip II, and the Empire to his brother.

### **Ferdinand I, 1555-64**

### **Maximilian II, 1564-76**

### **Rudolf II, 1576-1612**

### **Matthias, 1612-19**

Thirty Years' War begins, 1618.

## (2) THE PAPACY

1300-1600

	Accession		Accession
Boniface VIII	1295	Pius II (Piccolomini)	1458
Benedict XI	1303	Paul II	1464
Clement V	1305	Sixtus IV (Della Rovere)	1471
(1314-16 <i>no Pope</i> )		Innocent VIII (Cibo)	1484
John XXII	1316	Alexander VI (Borgia)	1492
Benedict XII	1334	Pius III (Piccolomini)	1503
Clement VI	1342	Julius II (Della Rovere)	1503
Innocent VI	1352	Leo X (Medici)	1513
Urban V	1362	Adrian VI	1521
Gregory XI	1370	Clement VII (Medici)	1523
Urban VI	1378	Paul III (Farnese)	1534
Boniface IX	1389	Julius III	1550
Innocent VII	1404	Marcellus II	1555
Gregory XII	1406	Paul IV	1555
Alexander V	1409	Pius IV (Milanese Medici)	1559
(Pisan Pope)		Pius V	1566
John XXIII	1410	Gregory XIII	1572
(Pisan Pope)		Sixtus V	1585
Martin V	1417	Urban VII	1590
Eugenius IV	1431	Gregory XIV	1590
(Antipope, Felice V)		Innocent IX	1591
Nicholas V	1447	Clement VIII (Aldobrandini)	1592
Calixtus III (Borgia)	1455		to 1605

<sup>1</sup> The Schismatic Popes were 'Clement VII,' 1378-94, and 'Benedict XIII,' 1394-1417(24).

### (3) VENETIAN DOGES

1300-1600

*N.B.*—Up to 1311 there were 50 Doges; from 1311 to 1606 there were 40; then followed 31 more. The last, Lodovico Manin, abdicated in 1797.

See the chapters on Venice; also *Medieval Italy*, pp. 522-523.

Giorgio ('Zorzi') Marino, 1311-12

Giov. Soranza, 1312-28

Francesco Dandolo, 1328-39

Bart. Gradenigo, 1339-42

Andrea Dandolo, 1343-54

Marino Faliero, 1354-55

(See his story, p. 120.)

Giov. Gradenigo, 1355-56

Giov. Dolfino, 1356-61

Lorenzo Celsi, 1361-65

Marco Cornaro, 1365-68

Andrea Contarini, 1368-82

(War of Chioggia, 1378-80.)

Michele Morosini, 1382

(Dies of the plague.)

Ant. Venier, 1382-1400

Michele Steno, 1400-13

Tommaso Mocenigo, 1414-23

Francesco Foscari, 1423-57

(See Foscari episode, p. 355.)

Pasquale Malipiero, 1457-62

Cristoforo Moro, 1462-71

Niccolò Tron, 1471-73

Niccolò Marcello, 1473-74

Pietro Mocenigo, 1474-76

Andrea Vendramin, 1476-78

Giov. Mocenigo, 1478-85

Mario Barbarigo, 1485-86

Agostino Barbarigo, 1486-1501

Leonardo Loredano, 1501-21

Ant. Grimani, 1521-23

Andrea Gritti, 1523-39

Pietro Lando, 1539-45

Francesco Donato, 1545-53

Marcantonio Trevisano, 1553-54

Francesco Venier, 1554-56

Lorenzo Priuli, 1556-59

Girolamo Priuli, 1559-67

Pietro Loredano, 1567-70

Luigi Mocenigo, 1570-77

Sebastiano Venier, 1577-78

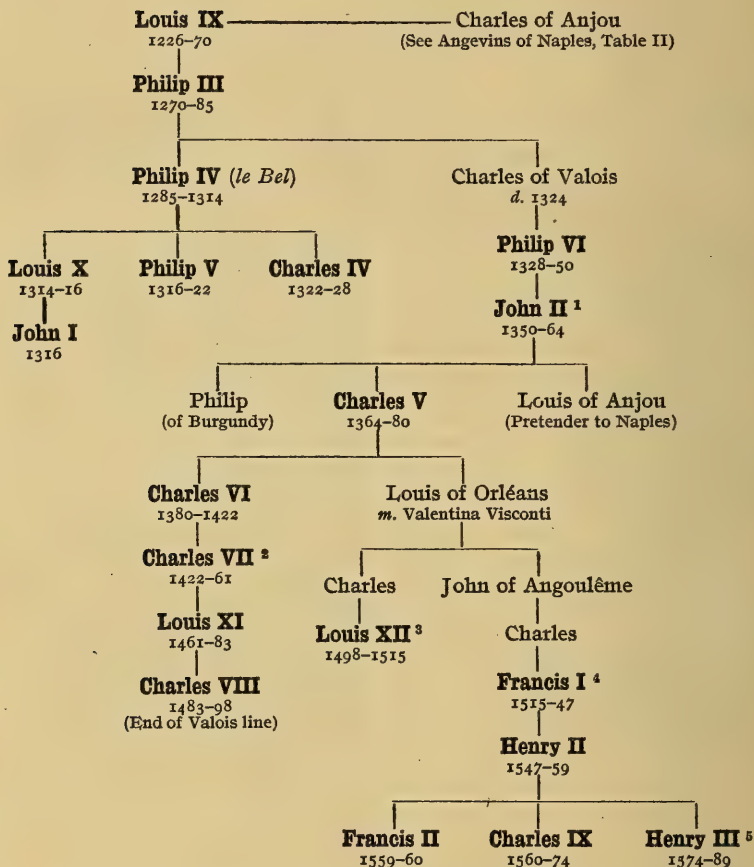
Niccolò da Ponte, 1578-85

Pasquale Cicogna, 1585-95

Maria Grimani, 1595-1606

# GENEALOGICAL TABLES

## I. KINGS OF FRANCE



The English rulers of this period are : Edward III, 1327-77 ; Richard II, 1377-99 ; Henry IV, 1399-1413 ; Henry V, 1413-22 ; Henry VI, 1422-61 ; Edward IV, 1461-83 ; Edward V, 1483 ; Richard III, 1483-5 ; Henry VII, 1485-1509 ; Henry VIII, 1509-47 ; Edward VI, 1547-53 ; Mary, 1553-8 ; Elizabeth, 1558-1603.

<sup>1</sup> Taken prisoner at Poitiers, 1356. <sup>2</sup> Crowned king at Orleans (Joan of Arc), 1429 ; enters Paris, 1439. <sup>3</sup> Founder of Orléans line ; conquers Milan, 1499 ; League of Cambray, 1508.

<sup>4</sup> Captured at Pavia by the Emperor Charles V, 1525. <sup>5</sup> Succeeded by Henry IV (Bourbon), who m. Marguerite of Orléans.



## II. KINGS AND QUEENS OF NAPLES

### (a) ANGEVINS

**Louis IX** of France — **Charles of Anjou**  
(See Table I)

1266-85  
King of Naples and Sicily  
(Sicilian Vespers, 1282)

**Charles II** (*lo Zoppo*)

1289-1309  
m. Mary of Hungary  
A prisoner from 1284 to 1289

**Charles Martel**

Dante's friend. Succeeds  
to throne of Hungary.  
Dies 1296. His grandson,  
Andreas, m. Joanna I

**Robert**

1309-43  
m. Violante, granddt. of Manfred

**Leonore**

m. Frederick of Sicily

**Charles**

d. young, in 1328  
Regent in Florence

**Joanna I** (Giovanna)

1343-82  
m. her relative, Andreas of Hungary; then the brother of his murderer, Luigi of Taranto; then James of Aragon; and, fourthly, Otto of Brunswick. Put to death by her relative Charles of Durazzo

**Charles of Durazzo** <sup>1</sup>

1382-86

**Joanna II**

Succeeds her brother in 1420  
In 1420 adopts Alfonso of Aragon; in  
1424 substitutes Louis III of Anjou.  
Dies in 1435. Wars between Angevins  
(*le bon roi René*) and Aragonese. Finally Alfonso of Aragon takes Naples

**Ladislaus**

1386-1414  
Succeeds as child; his claim  
contested by Louis the younger  
of Anjou

<sup>1</sup> Nephew to Ludwig, King of Hungary. Made heir by Joanna I; but later she chose Louis of Anjou (d. 1384), and the wars of succession devastated the kingdom for over half a century.

## KINGS AND QUEENS OF NAPLES—*continued*

### (b) ARAGONESE

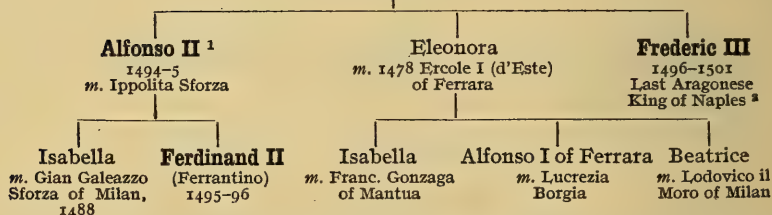
#### Alfonso (V of Aragon and I of Naples)

1442-58

Renounces Aragon, Sicily, and Sardinia to his brother, John II (father of Ferdinand the Catholic, who *m.* Isabella of Castile)

#### Ferdinand I (Ferrante)

1458-94

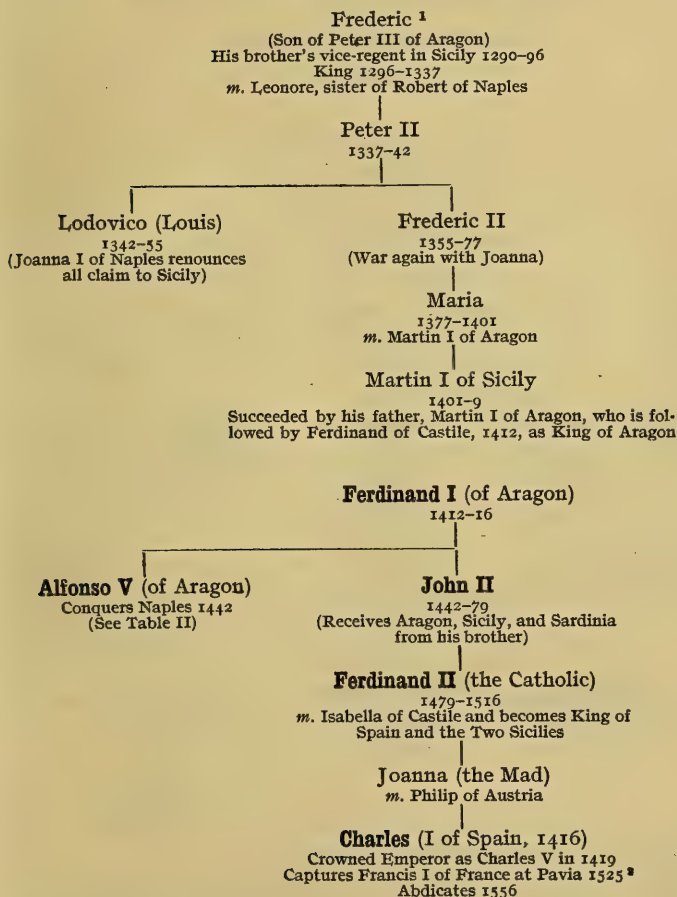


<sup>1</sup> When, in 1495, Charles VIII of France attacks Naples, Alfonso II resigns in favour of his youthful son Ferdinand II, who has to flee to Ischia: but after the retreat of Charles VIII he returns. Soon afterwards, 1496, he dies and is succeeded by his uncle, Frederic III.

<sup>2</sup> In 1503 Naples and Sicily came under Ferdinand the Catholic and then under Charles V (the Emperor), and, in spite of the fierce contests between French and Spaniards in Italy, the 'Two Sicilies' remained under Spanish viceroys until the 18th century.

### III. KINGS OF SICILY AND SPAIN

(For earlier Kings see *Medieval Italy*, p. 477)



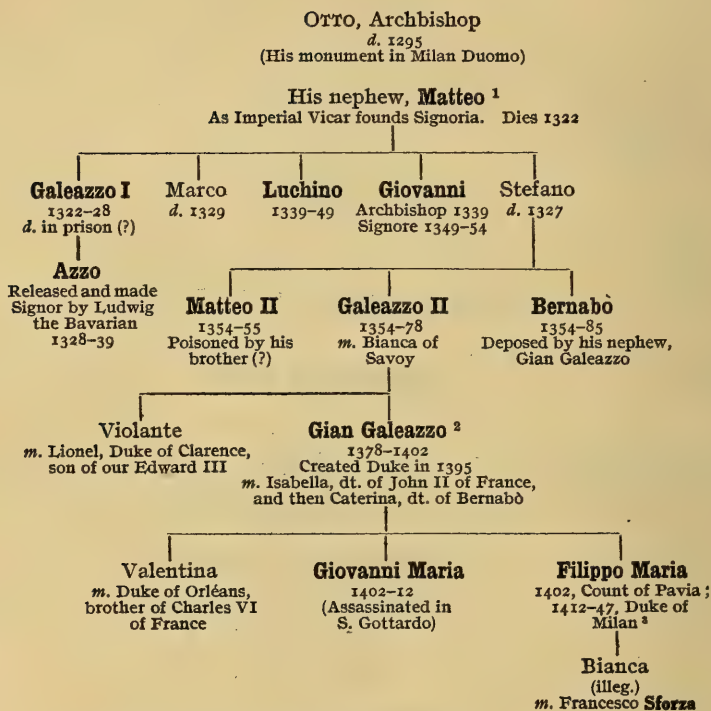
<sup>1</sup> On Frederic's death, 1337, Sicily, by the terms of the Peace of Caltabellotta, ought to have been resigned to the Angevins of Naples, but the Sicilians insisted on electing Frederic's son as their king (see *Medieval Italy*, p. 480).

<sup>2</sup> Charles V is succeeded in Spain by Philip II (who marries our Queen Mary). The brother of Charles, Ferdinand of Austria, is succeeded by Maximilian II and Matthias, in whose reign broke out (1618) the Thirty Years' War.

## IV. THE VISCONTI OF MILAN

*Eight Signori and three Dukes*

c. 1311-1447



<sup>1</sup> Founds Signoria in 1310, when Henry VII visits Milan.

<sup>2</sup> Gian Galeazzo began the Milan Duomo in 1386 and the Certosa (near Pavia) 1396. He was created Duke by the Emperor Wenzel (Venceslao). He is regarded as the Viscontean 'Viper' *par excellence*.

<sup>3</sup> From 1447 to 1450 Milan was a republic (*Repubblica Ambrosiana*).



## V. THE SFORZA OF MILAN

### *Six Dukes*

1450-1535

ATTENDOLO SFORZA  
(Romagna peasant. *Condottiere*)

**Francesco Sforza**  
*m.* Bianca Visconti  
Duke 1450-66

**Galeazzo Maria Sforza**  
*m.* Bona of Savoy  
1466-76  
Assassinated in S. Stefano

**Gian Gal. Maria Sforza**  
As child under Bona's regency  
dispossessed by his uncle 1480  
*m.* Isabella of Aragon (Naples)  
1488  
Dies (poisoned by his uncle ?)  
at Pavia 1494

**Lodovico Sforza (il Moro)**  
Duke of Bari 1479  
Seizes Regency of Milan 1480  
*m.* Beatrice d'Este 1491  
Assumes ducal title 1494  
Captured by Louis XII 1500  
*d.* in France 1508

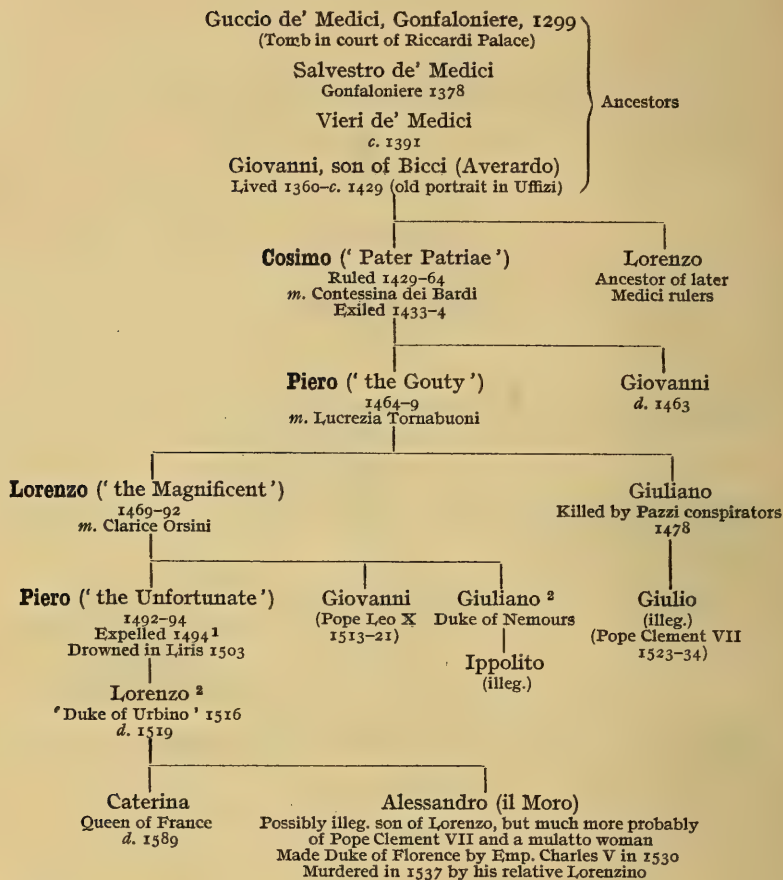
**Maximilian**  
Made Duke by Emperor  
and Pope 1512  
Abdicates 1515

**Francesco Maria**  
Made Duke 1522  
Continues to reign as vassal  
of Emp. Charles V after  
battle of Pavia 1525  
*m.* Charles' niece  
*d.* 1535, and the dukedom is  
appropriated by Charles

NOTE.—Gian Galeazzo had two sisters: (1) Bianca Maria, *m.* to Maximilian I of Germany;  
(2) Anna, *m.* to Alfonso, later Duke of Ferrara, brother to Beatrice d'Este.

## VI. THE EARLIER MEDICI

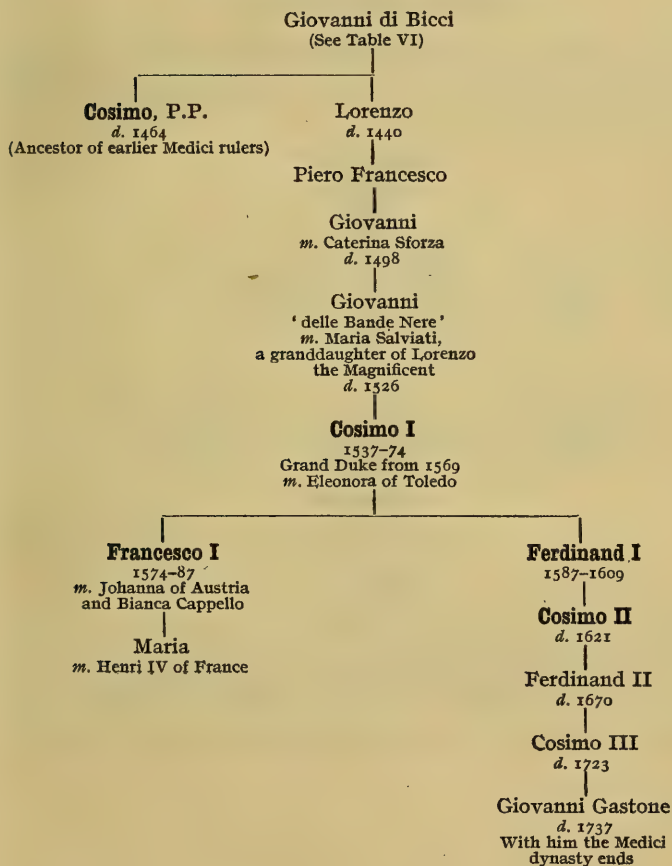
*Rulers from 1429 to 1537*



<sup>1</sup> After expulsion of Piero di Lorenzo a republic was proclaimed (Savonarola burnt 1498), but in 1512 his brothers Giovanni and Giuliano regain power. In 1513 Giovanni is elected Pope (Leo X), and in 1516 Giuliano dies. Piero's son, Lorenzo, who in 1516 had been made Duke of Urbino (see Table X) by his uncle Leo X, rules in Florence for three years. Then the Cardinal Giulio Medici (nephew of Lorenzo the Magnificent) is made Regent of Florence by Pope Leo. In 1523 Giulio is elected Pope (Clement VII) and sends the young Ippolito, son of Giuliano, to rule Florence. But on the sack of Rome and the apparent ruin of the Pope in 1527 the Medici are again expelled and for three years the Republic is revived. Then comes the siege of Florence by Spaniards, Germans, and Italians, instigated by Pope Clement—a siege that, greatly through the genius of Michelangelo, was prolonged for eleven months. When Florence fell (1530) the half-mulatto bastard of the Pope (or of Lorenzo), who had been promised the daughter of Charles V (well known later as Margaret of Parma), is restored to power and created by the Emperor the 'Duke of Florence.' For the later Medici see Table VII.

<sup>2</sup> These are the two Medici whose celebrated monuments by Michelangelo are in the *Sagrestia Nuova* of S. Lorenzo, Florence.

## VII. THE LATER MEDICI



## VIII. FERRARA

### THE ESTE DYNASTY

The Estensi were perhaps in early days Carlovingian governors of Este (Euganean hills, near Petrarca's Arquà). In the 11th century there were Margraves of Este, one of whom (Azzo III) is mentioned by Dante (*Purg.* v, 77). From the beginning of the 12th we can date the rule of these Margrafi di Este at Ferrara, of which they received investiture from the Pope in 1329. Then in the 15th century we have :



<sup>1</sup> The Hugo of Byron's poem. Parisina was his stepmother, the second wife of Niccolò (in the poem called Azo). Note that both the other illegitimate sons succeeded before Ercole, the legitimate heir (a fact not surprising in that age). For Ercole and his children see also Table II (b).

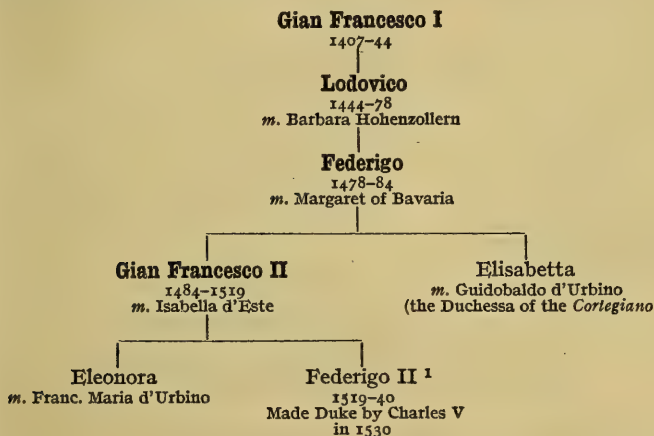
<sup>2</sup> On the death of Alfonso II the Duchy of Ferrara was appropriated by Pope Clement VIII.



## IX. MANTUA

### THE GONZAGA DYNASTY

In 1329 Ludwig the Bavarian sells the office of Imperial Vicar of Mantua to Luigi Gonzaga, who had killed the Signor, Bonaccolsi. Soon afterwards Gonzaga is elected 'Capitano del Popolo' and founds the signoria of his house. In 1433 Gian Francesco Gonzaga is created Marquis by the 'Emperor' Sigismund.

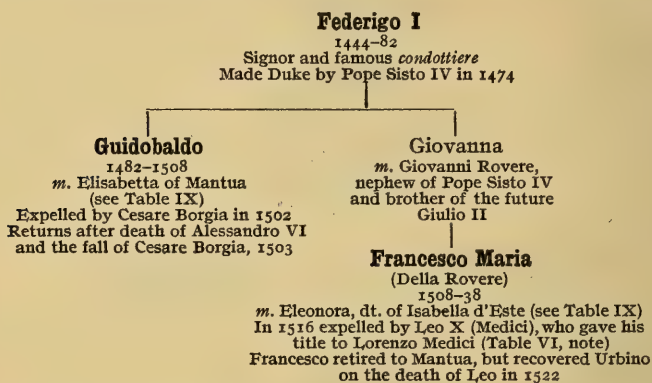


<sup>1</sup> Also made Marquis of Monteferrato. He employed Giulio Romano to build and decorate the famous Palazzo del Te. In 1627 the marquisate passed to a French branch of the family.

## X. DUKES OF URBINO

(Montefeltro and Rovere families)

As early as the 13th century members of the Montefeltro family were lords of Urbino. The most famous of these was Guido of Montefeltro. He extended his dominion over most of Romagna, but owes to Dante most of his fame (see p. 576 note 1, and *Medieval Italy*, p. 484 n.). For our purposes it will suffice to begin with :



Another Guidobaldo and another Francesco Maria followed. The latter, in 1626, was forced to resign, and the duchy was incorporated by Urban VIII in the Papal State.

# ARTISTS

(A. = architect. P. = painter. S. = sculptor)

## I. Pre-Renaissance (1300-1425)<sup>1</sup>

	PAGES
Arnolfo di Cambio ( <i>c.</i> 1232-1310), A. S. . . . .	112, 195-6
Cimabue ( <i>c.</i> 1240- <i>c.</i> 1302), P. . . . .	112, 178 <i>n.</i> , 179, 181 <i>n.</i>
Giovanni Pisano (1250- <i>c.</i> 1322 ?), A. S. . . . .	190, 195 <i>n.</i>
Duccio of Siena ( <i>c.</i> 1260-1319), P. . . . .	178 <i>n.</i>
Andrea Pisano (1273-1348), A. S. . . . .	112, 190
Giotto ( <i>c.</i> 1276-1336), A. P. S. . . . .	53, 70, 112, 141, 178-86, 191
Simone Martini of Siena ( <i>c.</i> 1283-1344), P.. . . .	162 <i>n.</i> , 178 <i>n.</i> , 186-7
The Lorenzetti of Siena ( <i>c.</i> 1300-50), P. . . . .	186-7
Lippo Memmi of Siena ( <i>died c.</i> 1356), P. . . . .	186
Taddeo Gaddi ( <i>c.</i> 1300-66), A. P. . . . .	178 <i>n.</i>
Orcagna (1309-68), A. P. S. . . . .	112, 186, 188 <i>n.</i> , 192-3
Fr. Talenti ( <i>died c.</i> 1390), A. . . . .	197
Agnolo Gaddi ( <i>c.</i> 1333-96), P. . . . .	186
Don Lorenzo, il Monaco ( <i>c.</i> 1370-1424), P.. . . .	399, 402

## II. Early Renaissance (1425-1470)

Gentile da Fabriano ( <i>c.</i> 1370-1450) . . . . .	362, 407
Della Quercia of Siena ( <i>c.</i> 1374-1438), S. . . . .	415, 549
Brunelleschi (1377-1446), A. S.. . . .	230 <i>n.</i> , 310, 351 <i>n.</i> , 416, 425-6
Ghiberti (1378-1455), S. . . . .	191, 211, 310, 416, 417
Vettor Pisano, 'Pisanello' ( <i>c.</i> 1380-1454), P. and Medallist . . . . .	362
Donatello (1386-1466), S. . . . .	189, 310, 339 <i>n.</i> , 417-19
Fra Angelico (1387-1455), P. . . . .	235, 310, 399-400
Masolino ( <i>c.</i> 1383-1435), P. . . . .	400
Masaccio (1400-28), P. . . . .	400, 513
Andrea del Castagno ( <i>c.</i> 1396-1457), P. . . . .	402
Paolo Uccello (1397-1475), P. . . . .	19, 401
Luca della Robbia (1400-82), S. . . . .	415, 419
Dom. Veneziano (1400-61), P. . . . .	407
Michelozzo (1396-1472), A. S. . . . .	230 <i>n.</i> , 310, 311 <i>n.</i> , 312, 427, 429

<sup>1</sup> Four eras are here roughly indicated by dates between which the chief painters of each era produced their best works. Somewhat different are the limits in the case of sculpture and of architecture. It perhaps suffices to regard the Trecento as the era of the Pre-Renaissance, the Quattrocento as that of the Early Renaissance, and the Cinquecento as that of the High (and Late) Renaissance. Venetian painting has its own eras.

# ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

	PAGES
Squarcione of Padua (1397-1473), P.	412 n.
Filarete ( <i>died</i> c. 1465), S.	235, 329 n., 429
Leon Batt. Alberti (1404-72), A.	221, 379, 427-8
Fra Fil. Lippi (1406-69), P.	402
Bern. Rossellini (c. 1409-64), A. S.	368 n., 421, 428
Meo of Settignano ( <i>fl.</i> 1450), A.	428
Jac. Bellini ( <i>died</i> c. 1470), P.	410, 508
Ant. Vivarini of Murano ( <i>died</i> c. 1470), P.	362, 410

## III. Middle Renaissance (1470-1500)

Benozzo Gozzoli (1420-98), P.	206, 313, 403
Piero della Francesca (c. 1423-92), P.	407
Ant. Rossellini (c. 1427-78), A. S.	325 n., 421
Desiderio da Settignano (1428-64), S.	421
Gentile Bellini (1429-1507), P.	362, 409, 508
Giovanni Bellini (1430-1516), P.	362, 409, 508
Mantegna (1431-1506), P.	363, 412 and note
Mino da Fiesole (1431-84), S.	421
Giuliano da Maiano (1432-90), A. S.	422, 423, 428
Benedetto da Maiano (1442-97), A. S.	70, 422, 428, 485
Ant. Pollaiuolo (1431-98), A. P. S.	422-3
Piero Pollaiuolo (1443-96), P. S.	287, 327, 423
Fra Giocondo (1435-1515), A.	432, 460, 542
Civitali of Lucca (1435-1501), S.	422
Luciano Laurana of Dalmatia ( <i>died</i> 1482), A.	429
Verrocchio (1435-88), P. S.	327, 403, 420, 421 n., 531
Melozzo da Forlì (1438-94), P.	244, 408 n., 412
Andrea della Robbia (1437-1528), S.	419-20, 426
Cosimo Rosselli (1439-1507), P.	243
Bart. Vivarini ( <i>died</i> c. 1500), P.	410, 508
Pietro Lombardo ( <i>died</i> 1515), A. S.	423, 431, 509
Giovanni Santi (c. 1440-94), P.	408 n.
Signorelli (c. 1440-1521), P.	243, 408
Bramante (1444-1514), A.	255, 289 n., 301, 429, 454-5, 555
Giuliano da Sangallo (1445-1516), A.	428, 455, 460
Botticelli (1446-1510), P.	223, 243, 316 n., 322, 326, 330, 335 n., 389, 404, 405
Perugino (1446-1524), P.	243, 404, 408, 537
Ghirlandaio (1449-94), P.	243, 406
Ambr. de Predis of Milan ( <i>fl.</i> c. 1500), P.	517, 532. See Note to Frontispiece
Francia of Bologna (1450-1517), P.	413
Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), P. S.	289, 293 n., 301, 344, 429, 513-14, 517 and n.
at Florence	518
life and works	530-33



# ARTISTS

	PAGES
Pinturicchio (1454-1513), P. . . . .	239, 243, 255, 408, 537
Ant. da Sangallo (1455-1534), A. . . . .	428
Filippino Lippi (1457-1504), P. . . . .	405-6
Aless. Leopardi ( <i>died c. 1522</i> ) . . . . .	423
Lorenzo di Credi (1459-1537), P. . . . .	518
Cima da Conegliano (1459-1517), P. . . . .	362, 410-11, 508
Crist. Solari of Milan ( <i>died c. 1525</i> ), A. S. . . . .	289 n., 304, 423, 429
Carpaccio ( <i>c. 1470 ?-after 1519</i> ), P. . . . .	362, 411-12, 508
Andrea da Sansovino (1460-1529), A. S. . . . .	455, 460, 545
Piero di Cosimo (1462-1521), P. . . . .	388 n., 518
Giovanni della Robbia (1467-1527), S. . . . .	420
Fr. Granacci (1469-1543), P. . . . .	338 n. and p. xxi

## IV. High and Late Renaissance (1500-1550)

Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475-1564), A. P. S. . . . .	224, 339 n., 438, 456, 460, 514, 548-53, 557, 561
Fra Bartolomeo (1475-1517), P. . . . .	345, 533-36
Albertinelli (1474-1515), P. . . . .	345, 533-5
Bern. Luini ( <i>c. 1470-1530</i> ), P. . . . .	517
Gaud. Ferrari ( <i>c. 1475-1546</i> ), P. . . . .	517 n.
Jacopo (Tatti) Sansovino (1486-1570), A. S. . . . .	361, 509, 510, 545, 555, 558-9
Giorgione ( <i>c. 1477-1510</i> ), P. . . . .	508, 526
Tiziano (1477-1576), P. . . . .	508, 526-8
Sodoma (1477-1549), P. . . . .	456, 517-18
Dosso Dossi (1479-1542), P. . . . .	
Palma Vecchio (1480-1528), P.. . . .	508, 526
Lor. Lotto (1480-1556), P. . . . .	
Garofalo (1481-1559), P. . . . .	
Peruzzi (1481-1537), A. . . . .	455, 556
Pordenone (1483-1539), P. . . . .	
Raffaello Santi (1483-1520), A. P. . . . .	456, 459, 515, 536-44, 556
Sanmicheli of Verona (1484-1559), A. . . . .	558
Ant. da Sangallo the younger (1485-1546), A. . . . .	556
Sebastiano del Piombo (1485-1547), P. . . . .	543
Andrea del Sarto (1486-1531), P. . . . .	486 n., 518-19
Baccio Bandinelli (1487-1559), S. . . . .	553 n.
Giulio Romano (1492-1546), A. P. . . . .	460, 515, 521, 543
Francesco, s. of Giuliano, Sangallo (1494-1576), A. . . . .	
Correggio (1494-1534), P. . . . .	523-5
Pontormo (1494-1557), P. . . . .	519-20
Bordone (1500-71), P. . . . .	
Benvenuto Cellini (1500-72), S. . . . .	546
Bronzino (1502-72), P. . . . .	519-20
Barozzi, Vignola (1507-73) . . . . .	557, 561
Vasari (1512-74), A. P. S. . . . .	241 n., 316, 401, 561

# ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

PAGES

The four Bassani of Venice (c. 1500-1620), P.	
Tintoretto (1518-94), P.	507, 509, 529
Palladio (1518-80), A.	509, 559
Jean Boulogne, called Gian da Bologna (1524-1608), S.	489 n., 496, 547
Paolo Veronese (1528-88), P.	509, 510, 529
Aless. Allori (1535-1607), P.	
Bern. Buontalenti (1536-1608), A.	495
Vincenzo Scamozzi (d. 1616), A.	510
Palma Giovane (1544-1628), P.	509

Except at Venice, where art still lingered, there was, after 1550, an almost entire cessation of great painting until towards the end of the century; there was a revival by the Naturalists, Eclectics, and Spanish-Neapolitans, such as Caravaggio (1569-1609), Ribera (1588-1656), the three Carracci (c. 1550-1620), Guido Reni (1575-1642), Cristofano Allori (1577-1621), Domenichino (1580-1641), and Guercino (1590-1666). For these see pp. 520-23.

## CHIEF WRITERS

PAGES

Dante (1265-1321)	1, 9 n., 45, 50, 66 n., 67 n., 74 n., 79 n., 90, 96, 139-152, 181-2
Dino Compagni (d. 1324)	97, 113, 137
Giov. Villani (d. 1348)	24, 72, 96, 97, 104, 105, 138
Petrarca (1304-74)	13, 14, 31, 38, 42, 43 n., 46, 50, 52, 57, 71, 82, 98, 126, 144, 152-167, 171
Boccaccio (1313-75)	73 n., 167-177
Sacchetti (1330-c. 1400)	85 n., 138, 177
Alberti (1404-72)	375, 376, 378-82
Luigi Pulci (1432-84)	377, 382-3
Boiardo (1434-94)	384-6
Lorenzo de' Medici (1449-92)	317, 390-93
Poliziano (1454-94)	179, 318, 322, 325, 334, 371, 386-90
Machiavelli (1469-1527)	1 n., 3, 10 n., 90-2, 255 n., 288 n. <i>et al.</i> , 343, 438, 476, 564-69
Ariosto (1474-1533)	301, 452, 569-71
Michelangelo (1475-1564)	512 n., 564, 571-74
Castiglione (1478-1529)	303 n., 537, ( <i>Cortegiano</i> ) 574 sq.
Guicciardini (1483-1540)	246, 270, and often quoted
his <i>History</i>	583
Bandello (c. 1485-1562)	474, 583
Berni (1497-1535)	574, 584
Benvenuto Cellini (1500-71)	(at Rome) 466 n., 468, 584-5
Guarini (1538-1612)	586
Tasso (1544-95)	586-89

# INDEX

*For the chief Artists and Writers see pp. 605-8.*

*For churches and other buildings see under Churches.*

*For Illustrations see List and Notes, pp. xv-xxviii.*

*Nothing in the way of a précis is given under the names of the great cities, as their history is treated fully in special chapters.*

*Members of great families (e.g. the Visconti, Sforza, and Medici) are given under the family names.*

ACCIAIOLI family 74, 172  
 Adrian VI, 442, 462  
 Ady, Mrs., 283 n., 290 n., 294 n. *et al.*  
 Agnadello, battle of, 499  
 Agrypulos, 311  
 Alberigo da Barbiano, 60, 62, 209, 279  
 Albizzi, 108-10  
 Albornoz, 13, 14, 46, 51 sq., 106  
 Aldus (printer), 364  
 Alexander V, 205, 227  
 Alexander VI, 219, 237, 244, 246-55, 296, 299  
 Alfonso I, of Naples, 207, 208, 218, 262, 266-8  
 Alfonso II, of Naples, 218, 269, 271-2  
 Alfonso I, of Ferrara, 247 n.  
 Alfonso II, of Ferrara, 586  
 Altopascio, battle of, 10, 101  
 Ambrogio, Giovanni di, 192  
 Ambrosian Republic, 210, 220, 283-5  
 Anagni, 23, 59 n.  
 Andreas of Hungary, 35, 73, Table II  
 Angevins, 17, 66 sq., 203 n., 265 n., 268  
 Antonino, Prior of S. Marco, 310, 332  
*Apollo del Belvedere*, 456  
 Aquinas, Thomas, 73 n.  
 Aragon, Aragonesi, 67 sq., Table III, *and under the names of the kings*  
 Arazzi, Raphael's Cartoons for, 467, 542 n.  
 Arbia, battle on (Montaperti), 3, 93

Aretino, Pietro, 563 *and n.*  
 Aristotle and Plato, 374 *and n.*  
*Arrabbiati*, 340 *et al.*  
*Arti* (Guilds), 94 n.  
 Assisi, Giotto at, 181  
 Aurelius, Marcus, equestrian statue of, 41, 557  
 Avignon, 13, 46, 52, 74, 153 *and n.*  
 'BABYLONISH CAPTIVITY,' 20, 58, *and see Avignon*  
 Bagnolo, Peace of, 243, 295  
*Balia*, 319 *et al.*  
*Bande (Compagnie) di ventura*, 17-19  
*Banderesi*, 51, 63  
 Bandini, 323, 325-6  
 Bardi family, 104  
 Basel, Council of, 206, 312  
 Beatrice d'Este, 221, 290 n., 292-301  
 Bembo (Cardinal), 562, 578, 583; his epitaph on Raphael, 544  
 Benedict XI, 182 n.  
 Benedict XII, 28 sq., 157, 182 n.  
 'Benedict XIII' (Schismatic), 64, 205, 229  
 Benevento, battle of, 93  
 Bentivogli, 7  
 Berenson (art critic), 179 n., 180 n. *et al.*  
 Bianca, Cappello, Sforza, etc., *see under family names*  
 Bisceglie, Duke of, 252  
 Boccaccio—*see p. 608*

# ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

Bologna, 134 *n.*; Council at, 443, 445, 449, 469, 502, 504  
 Bona of Savoy (and Milan), 286, 290-1  
 Boniface VIII, 23, 59 *n.*, 140 *n.*  
 Boniface IX, 64, 257  
 Borgia, *see* Calixtus III and Alexander VI  
 Borgia, Cesare, 246-55, 275, 303 *n.*, 450  
 Borgia, Lucrezia, 247 *sq.*  
 Borromeo, Carlo, 474 *sq.*  
 Borsio of Ferrara, 232, 384, Table VIII  
 Bourbon, Jacques de, 260  
 Bourbon, Duc de, 438, 463, 465, 470, 472  
 Braccio, 279  
 Bragadino, 506  
 Brétigny, Peace of, 52, 159  
 Bridges of Florence, 112 *n.*  
 Brienne, W. de ('Duke of Athens'), 14, 103  
 Brigit, Saint, 54  
 Bruni, Leonardo, 368 *and n.*, 421  
 Brunswick, Otto of, 75  
 Buonconte, 95 *n.*, 181  
 Burchiello, 377  
 Bussolari, friar, 84, 159 *n.*  
 Byron, 121 *n.*, 124 *n.*, 129 *n.*, 161, 356 *n.*, 357 *n.*, 382 *and n.*  
 Byzantine Empire, 114 *n.*

## CALIXTUS III, 236

Camaldoli, 375  
 Cambrai, League of (1508), 348, 359, 437, 439, 499  
 Cambrai, Peace of (1529), 469, 486  
 Campaldino, battle of, 18 *n.*, 94, 143, 181  
 Cannon, 131 *n.*  
*Canzoniers* of Petrarca, 162 *sq.*  
 Cappello, Bianca, 448, 492, 494-5  
 Capponi, Neri, 309  
 Capponi, Piero, 336, 338  
 Capponi, Niccolò, 485-6 *n.*  
 Capponi, Gino (historian), 484  
 Caracciolo, 261-4  
 Cardona, 479-80  
 Carducci, Francesco, 485, 487  
 Carducci, Giosuè, 177  
 Careggi (villa), 313, 315, 317, 376  
 Carmagnola, 210, 213, 278, 350-53  
 Carrara family (of Padua):  
     Jacopo, 7  
     Massilio, 118 *n.*  
     Jacopo II, 158

## Carrara family—*continued*

    Francesco, 125-6 *sq.*, 133  
     Francesco Novello, 133, 134  
 Casentino, 142-3, 168  
 Castiglione's *Cortegiano*, 574 *sq.*  
 Castruccio Castracane, 5, 8, 10, 23 *sq.*, 100  
 Cateau-Cambrésis, Peace of, 492  
 Catharine, Saint, of Siena, 13, 55, 57, 60-2  
 Cavalcanti, Guido, 97  
 Cellini, Benvenuto, his *Autobiography*, 466 *n.*, 468, 584  
 Cesena, massacre at, 58  
 Cestian pyramid, 57 *n.*  
 Charles of Anjou, 10, 57 *n.*, 66  
 Charles of Calabria, 32, 73, 101  
 Charles of Durazzo, 13, 16, 62, 75 *sq.*  
 Charles IV (Emp.), 12, 13, 42, 45, 49 *sq.*  
 Charles Martel, 66-7, 72  
 Charles of Valois, 9, 97, 140  
 Charles the Lame, 66, Table II  
 Charles VIII (France), 219, 222, 248, 295-300, 336 *sq.*  
 Charles V (Emp.), 441, 443, 446, 458, 472 *sq.*, 491  
 Chioggia, war of, 16, 17, 126 *sq.*  
 Christ, King of Florence, 335 *n.*, 486 *n.*  
 Chrysoloras, 368; the younger, 369

## CHURCHES and other buildings:

**Assisi.** S. *Francesco*, 181-5  
**Bologna.** S. *Petronio*, 198, 469 *n.*  
**Como.** *Duomo*, 198, 430  
**Florence.** SS. *Annunziata*, 95 *n.*  
     *Badia*, 95 *n.*, 196. *Badia of Fiesole*, 482 *n.* *Badia of S. Salvi*, 99, 486 *n.* *Carmine*, 400. S. *Croce*, 95 *n.*, 183, 196, 421, 422; (Pazzi Chapel) 426. *Duomo* 95 *n.*, 192, 195-7, 230 *n.*, 324 *n.*, 425, 553; (Campanile) 185, 191, 197, 418. S. *Lorenzo*, (Church) 230 *n.*, 419, 421, 426, 551 *and n.*; (Sagrestia Vecchia) 315; (Sagrestia Nuova) 552; (Cappella de' Principi) 496. S. *Marco*, (Church) 332, 387; (Convent) 310, 332, 343; (Library) 230, 312, 343 *n.*, 427. S. *Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi*, 326. S. *Maria Novella*, 313, 379, 427; (Spanish Chapel) 178 *n.*, 187, 490 *n.* S. *Miniato*, 421. *Ognissanti*, 388 *n.*



# INDEX

406. *Orsanmichele*, 112, 192-3, 196, 418. *S. Reparata* (old Duomo), 102, 110, 196. *S. Salvatore*, 196. *S. Spirito*, 230 n., 288, 320, 426. *Loggia de' Lanzi*, 192, 490 n. *Ospedale degli Innocenti*, 426. *Palazzo Medici* (Riccardi), 230 n., 313, 324, 424, 427. *Pal. Pitti*, 230 n., 424, 426, 491 and n. *Pal. Rucellai*, 427. *Pal. Strozzi*, 428, 485. *Pal. Vecchio*, 95 n., 196, 487 and n., 490. *Uffizi*, 491 n.; (Tribuna) 495. *Fortezza da Basso*, 487 n. 'Column of Justice,' 490.
- Lucca.** Duomo, 416, 418, 529 n., 534
- Mantua.** *S. Andrea*, 428. *Pal. del Te*, 515
- Milan.** Duomo, 88, 198, 289 n. *S. Gottardo*, 81, 209, 277 n. *S. Maria delle Grazie*, 289 n., 304, 429. *S. Satiro*, 289 n. *S. Stefano*, 221, 289. *Castello di Porta Giovia* (Sforza Castle), 85, 86, 221, 277, 283 n., 288, 291
- Naples.** *S. Chiara*, *S. Domenico*, *S. Maria Nuova*, 69 n. Duomo, 69 n., 268. *S. Lorenzo*, 69 n., 194 n. *Castel Nuovo*, 69 n., 260 n., 262, 266, 268. *Castel Capuano*, 260 n., 263. *Castel S. Elmo*, 260 n. *Porta Capuana*, 266, 423. *Triumphal Arch of Alfonso*, 268, 423
- Orvieto.** Duomo, 192, 195, 198
- Padua.** *Madonna dell' Arena*, 182
- Pavia.** *Castello Mirabello*, 85, 471. *Certosa di Pavia*, 88, 289 n., 430
- Pisa.** *Campo Santo*, 187, 195 n., 403. *S. Maria della Spina*, 194. *S. Stefano* (of the Order of Cavalieri), 493 n.
- Pistoia.** *S. Andrea*, 190
- Rimini.** Duomo ('Tempio Malatestiano'), 221, 407 n., 428
- Rome.** *S. Angelo in Pescheria*, 37. *SS. Apostoli*, 244. *Il Gesù*, 561. *Lateran Baptistery*, 40. *Lateran Basilica*, 53, 182, 467 n. *S. Maria degli Angeli*, 461, 557. *S. Maria Maggiore*, 235. *S. Maria della Pace*, 460, 555. *S. Maria del Popolo*, 556. *S. Paolo fuori*, 53, 57, 235. *S. Pietro in Montorio*, 244, 454. *S. Pietro in Vaticano*, 557 n. et al. *S. Pietro in Vincoli*, 240, 244, 461, 550. *S. Silvestro*, 467 n. *S. Spirito della Sassia*, 466 n. *S. Stefano Rotondo*, 235. *S. Trinità de' Monti*, 255. *Palazzo Farnese*, 44, 462. *Pal. Farnesina* (Chigi), 455, 460, 556. *Pal. Madama*, 462. *Pal. Rospigliosi*, 523. *Pal. Vaticano*, 235; (Belvedere Cortile) 555; (Galleries) 495 n.; (Library) 234, 243, 468; (Sale Borgia) 255; (Sistine Chapel) 243, 408, 456; (Stanze) 235, 456, 459, 539 sq.; ('Studio' of Nicholas V) 235. *Aqua Virgo*, 235. *Cancelleria*, 255, 555. *Fontana di Trevi*, 235. *Villa Giulia*, 561
- Siena.** Duomo, 195, 198
- Venice.** *Frari*, 118 n., 199, 201, 423. *S. Giorgio Maggiore*, 311 n. *S. Giovanni e Paolo*, 118 n., 124, 199. *S. Redentore*, 559. *S. Zaccaria*, 361, 431 n. *Palazzo ducale*, 116 n., 118 n., 193, 201. *Pal. Foscari*, *Pal. Giustiniani*, *Pal. Grimani*, *Pal. Pisani*, 361. *Pal. Vendramin*, 361, 431. *Bridge of Sighs*, 560. *Campanile and Loggetta*, 509. *Casa Falier*, 200. *Cà d'oro*, 199, 361, 423. *Colleoni statue*, 361. *Giants' Stair*, 121 n., 361, 423. *Libreria Vecchia*, 509, 559. *Porta della Carta*, 361, 431 n. *Procuratie Vecchie*, 509, 560. *Rialto*, 560. *Scuola di S. Marco*, 361
- Vercelli.** *S. Andrea*, 194
- Verona.** *S. Anastasia*, 198. *Monuments of the Scaligeri*, 193. *Palazzo del Consiglio*, 432. *Porta Nuova and Porta del Palio*, 558
- Ciampi riot, 107-10  
 Clement IV, 66  
 Clement V, 8, 20, 141, 183  
 Clement VI, 12, 31 sq., 157  
 'Clement VII' (Schismatic), 25 n., 59, 60, 64  
 Clement VII (see also under Medici), 327, 442, 443, 462-9, 481-3, 486, 552  
 Clement VIII, 447

# ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

- Cola di Rienzo, *see* Rienzo  
 Colleone (-i), 284, 361, 420, 423, 531  
 Colonna family, 11 n., 22  
   Sciarrà, 8, 22, 23 sq.  
   Stephen, 22, 26, 31, 155  
   Stephen (younger), 22, 32, 43  
   Giordano, 22, 153, 155  
   Giovanni (Cardinal), 22, 33, 153 n., 155  
   Lorenzo, 243  
   Vittoria, 541, 572, 578  
 Columns, otiose and merely decorative, 554  
 Communes, Philippe de, 270, 290 n., 300  
 'Conclave' (of cardinals), 450 n.  
 Conservatori, 53, 63  
 Constantinople taken by Turks, 233  
 Constanz, Council of, 16, 205  
 'Constitutions' of Ludwig the Bavarian, 30  
 Contarini, Andrea (Doge), 126, 129, 130 n.  
 Corio, chronicler, 288 n., 289, 290 n.  
 Cornaro, Marco (Doge), 126  
 Cornaro, Caterina, 225, 358-9  
*Cortegiano*, II, 574 sq.  
 Cosimo, *see* Medici  
 Crete (Candia), rebellion and reconquest of, 126, 160; conquered by Turks (1669), 508  
 Cristoforo Moro (Doge), 239  
 Crown, Iron, 23, 50, 232, 469 n. *et al.*  
   *See picture in "Medieval Italy"*  
 Curzola, battle of, 6, 115  
 Cyprus, taken by Turks, 506-7
- DAHMATIA, ceded by Venice to Hungary, 125; conquered by Venetians, 213; taken by Turks, 215  
 Dandolo, Andrea, 119-21  
 Dante, life and works, 139-52 (*see also* p. 608); his verdicts, 150 n.; the *Divina Commedia*, 145-52, and Boccaccio's lectures on, 172; his knowledge of Plato, 151 n.; portrait by Giotto, 182; bronze bust, Fig. 4.  
 David of Michelangelo, 550 *et al.* *See* p. 607  
*Day and Night* of Michelangelo, 552  
*Decameron*, 174 sq.  
 Djem, Prince, 248 n.  
 Doges, 115, 116 n., List 3  
 Doges' Palace, *see under* Churches and other buildings  
 Doges' Palace tracery, 201, 360  
 'Donation' of Constantine, 228 n.  
 Donatello, *see* p. 605  
 Donati, Corso, 9, 97, 98-9  
 Doria family:  
   Paganino, 119, 121  
   Luciano, 128 n.  
   Pietro, 128 sq., 131  
 'Doves, Brethren of the,' 28  
 Dress, in the Renaissance, 396 n.
- 'ECLECTICS,' 516 *and n.*, 522. *See* p. 608  
 Eleonora (Leonora) of Naples and Duchess of Ferrara, 218 n., 271, 384  
 Eleonora of Portugal, Empress of Frederick III, 232  
 Eleonora of Toledo and Grand Duchess of Tuscany, 490 *and n.*, 491, 492  
 Eleonora Gonzaga, Duchess of Urbino (dt. of Isabella d'Este), 578  
 Emilia (Aemilia), 412 n.  
 Erasmus, 453 n.  
 Ercole I, Duke of Ferrara, 241, 243, 271, 292-3  
 Este, family of, 7 *et al.* *See* Table VIII  
 Eugenius IV, 206, 228-9, 312
- FACINO CANE, 209, 277-8  
 Faliero, Marino (Doge), 15, 120 sq.  
*Famiglia, Della*, by Alberti, 380-1  
 Farinata degli Uberti, 3  
 'Felix V' (Antipope), 207, 228 n., 229, 231  
 Ferdinand I (Ferrante) of Naples, 218, 268-71  
 Ferdinand II (Ferrantino or Ferdinando) of Naples, 219, 249, 272-4  
 Ferdinand II ('the Catholic') of Spain, 219, 273-5, 436, 441  
 Ferruccio, 486-7  
 'Fiammetta,' 169  
 Ficino, Marsilio, 374 sq.  
*Fioretti di S. Francesco*, 137  
 Florence. *See special chapters; and for buildings see Index under* Churches  
 Florence, Council of, 212, 312  
 Florence, siege of, 484 sq.  
 'Fornarina, La,' 543  
 Fornovo, battle of, 225, 300  
 Foscari (Doge), 224-5, 349-57

# INDEX

Foscari, the two, 355-7  
 Francesca da Rimini, 145  
 Francis I (France), 458, 472-3  
 Frederic I (Sicily), 23  
 Frederic (Federigo), Duke of Urbino,  
*see* Montefeltro  
 Frederick III (Naples), 219, 250, 271,  
 274-5, 317  
 Frederick Barbarossa (Emp.), 2, II,  
 78  
 Frederick III (Emp.), 4 n., 206 n., 207,  
 228, 231-2  
 Frundsberg, 463, 471  
  
 GANDIA, Duke of, 247, 249  
 Gaston de Foix, *see under* Ravenna  
 Gattamelata, 213, 281 *and n.*, 419  
 Gemisthos Plethon, 312-3, 373  
 Genoa and Genoese, 114, 115 n.,  
 119 n., 124, 127, 346-7  
*Gerusalemme, La*, of Tasso, 588  
 Gioiosa, Casa, 371 *and n.*  
 Giotto, *see p.* 605  
 'Giotteschi,' 179, 186 *et al.*  
 Giulio Medici (Cardinal), *see* Clement  
 VII  
*Giunta*, 504  
 Giustiniano, Leonardo, 377-8  
*Giustiniane*, 378  
 'Golden Bull,' 30, 51 n.  
 Gonzaga family of Mantua, *see* Table  
 IX  
   Lodovico (Luigi), 8, 27  
   Francesco (c. 1390), 87  
   Gian Francesco I, 281 (first Mar-  
     quis)  
   Gian Francesco II, 299, 300, 436,  
     576 n.  
   Elisabetta (Duchess of Urbino), 576  
 Gothic architecture, 194 *sq.*  
 Gothic, Venetian, 199 *sq.*  
 Gregorovius, and his *History of the*  
*City of Rome*, 8 n., 40, 50; horror  
 at atrocities, 56 n., 217; untrust-  
 worthy, 467 n.; prophecy as to  
 Prussia and the 'sceptre of Euro-  
 pean supremacy,' 473  
 Gregory XI, 13, 16, 55-58, 106  
 Gregory XII, 205, 227, 257  
 Gregory XIII and his Calendar, 446  
 Grimani, Ant. (Doge), 439  
 Guarini, *see p.* 608  
 Guarino of Verona, 368 n., 370  
 Guelf and Ghibelline, 5, *and often*  
 Guelfa, La Parte, 93 n., 107

Guidi, Conti, 142  
 Guidobaldo of Urbino, *see* Monte-  
 feltro *and* Table X  
  
 HAWKWOOD, Sir John, 19, 56, 58, 87,  
 III, 129, 134  
 Henry VII (of Luxemburg), I, 4, 7,  
 9, 20, 99, 100  
 'Humanism,' 368 *sq. et al.*  
 Hunyadi, 215  
 Huss, John, 51, 206, 213, 350  
  
 ILARIA GUINIGI, 416  
 Ilario, Frate, 142  
*imborsazione*, 102  
*incunabuli*, 364 n.  
*Index*, the, 446  
 Innocent VI, 12, 46, 50  
 Innocent VIII, 218, 245, 295  
 Inquisition (Venetian), 116, 124 n.  
 Inquisition (Roman Church), 445  
 Isabella d'Este, 225, 292, 294 n., 359,  
 363; at siege of Rome, 467 n.,  
 576 n.  
 Isabella of Naples and Duchess of  
 Milan, 271, 294, 298, 300 *and n.*,  
 303  
 Isotta, 221  
  
 JAMES of Aragon, 75  
 Jesuits, 446  
 'Jesuitic' church architecture, 561  
 Joanna I (Naples), 13, 35, 53, 73 *sq.*  
 Joanna II (Naples), 208, 259-65  
 Johanna of Austria, 492, 494  
 John XXII, 8, 11, 21, 27, 80, 157  
 John XXIII (*Pisan Pope*), 205 *and*  
*n.*, 208, 227, 258, 259 n.  
 John, King of Bohemia, 7, 12, 22 n., 27  
 John 'the Parricide,' 8 n.  
 Jubilees, 64 n., 181, 217, 231  
 Julius II, 436, 449-57  
  
 'LADIES' LEAGUE' (or Peace), *see*  
 Peace of Cambrai (1529)  
 Ladislaus, King of Naples, 16, 63,  
 76, 208, 256-9  
 Landino, 375 *and n.*, 376  
 Lando, Michele di, 108-9  
*Landsknechte*, 463, 471  
*Laocoön*, the, 456 *and n.*  
*Last Judgment*, by Michelangelo, 514,  
 552  
 Laura (Petrarca's), 154 n., 163-4

# ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

- Laurentian Library, *see* Florence  
under Churches and other build-  
ings  
*Lega Santa*, 436, 439, 500; second,  
463  
Legnano, battle of, 2, 78  
Lent, Milanese, 288 *n.*  
Leo X, 441, 457-62. *See also* under  
Medici  
Leontios Pilatos, 171, 311, 367  
Lepanto, battle of, 507  
Livorno (Leghorn), 211, 493 *n.*, 496  
*and n.*  
Lodi, Peace and League of, 207, 212  
285  
Lodovico il Moro, *see* Sforza family  
Loredano, Leonardo (Doge), 440, 500  
Louis of Anjou, 16, 75, 76  
Louis II of Anjou, 77, 208, 256  
Louis III of Anjou, 262-5 *n.*  
Louis XII (France), 219, 251, 274-5,  
302, 436  
Loyola, Ignatius, 446, 561  
Ludwig of Bavaria, 8, 22 *sq.*, 42, 80  
Ludwig of Hungary, 43, 45, 74  
Luigi of Taranto, 74  
Luther, 453 *n.*, 459
- MACAULAY on Machiavelli, 569 *n.*  
'Machiavellism' in Germany, 569  
Machiavelli's militia, 478, 486  
Machiavelli's *Principe*, 565 *sq. and*  
*p.* 608  
Malaspina, Marchese, 141  
Malatesta, Sigismondo, 221  
Margaret of Parma, 469, 486 *and n.*,  
490  
Marignano, battle of, 438, 444, 501  
Marsili, Fra Luigi, 368  
Marsilio Ficino, *see* Ficino  
Martin V, 205-6, 259 *n.*, 262  
'Marzocco,' 338  
Maximilian I (Emp.), 296, 299, 302  
Maximilian II (Emp.), 492  
Medici, family of, 222 *n.*, Tables VI  
*and VII*  
Salvestro, 107-9  
Vieri, 109 *n.*, 308  
Giovanni di Bicci, 211, 309, 310  
Cosimo, *Pater Patriae*, 211, 222,  
309-14  
Piero I ('Gottoso'), 222, 313-15  
Giovanni (br. to Piero I), 313, 314  
Lorenzo il Magnifico, 223, 242, 316-  
35; portraits, 316
- Medici family—*continued*  
Giuliano, killed by Pazzi conspi-  
rators, 322-7  
Piero II ('the Unfortunate'), 223,  
224 *n.*, 335-7, 436  
Giovanni (br. to Piero II), 245, 269,  
337. *See* Leo X  
Giuliano the younger (br. to Piero  
II), Duke of Nemours, 439, 481-2  
*and n.*; statue, 552; at Urbino,  
578  
Giulio (s. of elder Giuliano), 327,  
481-3. *See* Clement VII  
Maddalena (dt. of Lorenzo Magn.),  
245, 269, 329 *n.*  
Clarice Strozzi (dt. of Piero II),  
484-5  
Lorenzo II (s. of Piero II), 'Duke  
of Urbino,' 439, 443, 482-3;  
statue, 552  
Ippolito (illeg. s. of Giuliano the  
younger?), 488. *See* Illustra-  
tion  
Caterina (dt. of Lorenzo II), 483,  
484  
Alessandro the Moor (illeg. s. of  
Clement VII—or of Lorenzo II?),  
first Duke of Florence, 444, 447,  
487-9  
Lorenzino, kills Alessandro, 447,  
488, 491  
Giovanni delle Bande Nere, 463,  
471, 473, 489 *n.*  
Cosimo I (s. of last named, first  
Grand Duke of Tuscany), 447,  
489-93  
Francesco I, 447, 493-5  
Ferdinand I, 447, 492, 495-6  
Meloria, battle of, 5, 6, 94  
*Mercury* of Gian da Bologna, 496, 547  
Michelangelo, *see* pp. 607, 608; his  
*Rime*, 512 *n.*, 571 *sq.*  
*Miniatura*, 399  
Mirandola, 451. *See* Pico  
Mocenigo, Pietro (Doge), 423  
Mocenigo, Tommaso (Doge), 213, 349-  
50, 423  
Mohammed II, 215, 233, 362  
*Mona Lisa*, 526, 532  
Montaperti, battle of, 93  
Montecatini, battle of, 9, 100, 144  
Montefeltro family, *see* Table X  
Federigo, Duke of Urbino, 281,  
370, 429  
Guidobaldo, 252, 539, 576 *sq.*



# INDEX

Montemurlo, battle of, 490, 494  
 Montesecco, 323  
 Morelli (art critic), 526, 536 *et al.*  
*Morgante Maggiore*, 382 sq.  
 Moses of Michelangelo, 551, 552  
 Mühlendorf, battle of, 8, 11, 22  
 Murano, 117  
 Muratori, 2 n., 29 n. *et al.*  
 Music in Renaissance art, 397 n.

NARDI, Bernardo, 319  
 'Naturalists,' 521 sq., p. 608  
 Niccoli, 311, 368  
 'Nicholas V' (Antipope), 8, 25, 27  
 Nicholas V, 207, 230-36, 368  
*Niobe Group*, 495  
 Nori, 325 n.  
 Novara, battle of, 437

OIL-PAINTING, 362, 398, 414  
 Orange, Prince of, 468, 487  
*Ordinamenti di Giustizia*, 2, 35, 51, 95, 306  
 Oricellari Gardens, 376  
*Orylando Innamorato*, 385  
*Orylando Furioso*, 565 sq.  
 Orléans family, 87 n., Table I  
 Orsini, Clarice, 318  
*Ottava rima*, 173

PADUA, 7, 133. *See under Carrara*  
 Palaeologus, John VII, 206, 312-3  
 Palaeologus, Constantine, 215, 233  
 Pandolfo d'Alopo, 260  
 Panormita, 370, 371  
 Passerini (Cardinal), 483  
 Pater, 525  
 Patriarch, Joseph, 313  
 Paul II, 239  
 Paul III, 552  
 Pavia, battle of, 219, 440, 470 sq.  
 Pavia, Mirabello Park and Castle, 471 n.  
 Pazzi conspiracy, 223, 242, 323-7  
 Pazzi family, 326  
 Pedro, Don, 263, 266  
 Perspective, 185 n., 398  
 Perspective frescos, 524 n.  
 Peter IV of Aragon, 119  
 Petrarca, 152-167. *See p.* 608  
 Petrucci, 319, 325  
 Philip II of Spain, 446, 491  
*Piagnoni*, 340 *et al.*  
 Piccinino, Niccolò, 278, 281, 284 n.  
 Piccolomini, *see* Pius II and III

Piccolomini, Biblioteca, 239, 537  
 Pico della Mirandola, 332, 333 n., 336 n., 375 *and n.*, 376, 387, 391 n.  
*Pielra dura*, 496 n.  
 Pisa, Council of, 205, 258  
 Pisa, attacked by Soderini, who attempts to divert the Arno, 478; taken finally by Florentines, 479  
 Pisani, Niccolò, 119, 122  
 Pisani, Vettor, 127 sq., 132 n.  
 Pisano, Niccolò, 185 n., 188, 414<sup>3</sup>  
 Pisano, Giovanni, 190, 195, *and p.* 605  
 Pisano, Andrea, 190, 195, *and p.* 605  
 Pisano, Vettor, 362, *and p.* 605  
 Pitti, Luca, 222, 315, 317  
 Pitti, Palazzo, *see* Florence *under* Churches and other buildings  
 Pius II, 207, 225 n., 232, 237-9  
 Pius III, 254, 436, 450  
 Pius IV, 446  
 Pius V, 446, 492  
 Plague, the Great, 105, 138, 153 n., 157, 170; Boccaccio's description, 174, 175 n.; Plague of 1524, 471  
 Platina, 239, 243, 369  
 Plato and Aristotle, 374 n.  
 'Platonic Academy,' 311, 368, 372-6  
 Plethon, *see* Gemisthos  
 Poggio, 311, 368 n.  
 Poggio, the younger, 323  
 Poggio a Caiano (villa), 428-9, 495  
 Poggio Gherardo, 175 n.  
 Pola, naval battle at, 128  
 Polenta, Guido da, 145  
 Poliziano, *see p.* 608  
 Polo, Marco, 115 n.  
 Porcari, Stefano, 207, 231, 233  
*Pozzi e Piombi*, 353 *and n.*  
 Prag, 45; University, 51  
*Principe, Il*, 565-69  
 Printing invented, 366 n.

RAVENNA, battle of, 437-8, 451  
 Reformation, the, 445, 459  
*Regno, Il*, 66 sq.  
 René of Anjou, 220, 233 n., 265 sq.  
     his son Jean, 268  
 Riario, Pietro (Cardinal), 241  
 Riario, Girolamo, 241  
 Riario, Raffaele (Cardinal), 242, 255, 323, 457  
 Rienzo, Cola di, 15, 32-49, 105  
*rispetti*, 377  
 Rizzi, Venetian sculptors, 423 *and n.*, 431

# ITALY FROM DANTE TO TASSO

Robert, King of Naples, 10, 23, 25, 32, 66-73

Robert, Cardinal Bishop of Geneva (Antipope), 56, 58, 59. *See* Clement VII

Rococo (barocco) style, 561

Rome, *see special chapters and under* Churches and other buildings

Rome, sack of, 462 sq.

*rovere*, 240 n.

Rovere, Della, family :

Francesco, *see* Sixtus IV

Giuliano, *see* Julius II

Giovanni, 242, Table X

Francesco Maria, third Duke of Urbino, 439, 463, Table X

Ruprecht (Emp.), 134

*rustica* work (*rustico*), 424

SADE, Abbé de, 154 n.

Salviati, Archbp., 323, 325

Salviati, Maria, 489 n.

Sannazaro, 270 n.

Sanseverini, the, 302 n.

Sapientza, naval battle at, 439, 505

Savoy, Dukes of, 132, 207, 447 n.

Savonarola, 223, 330-43

Scala, Della, family :

Can Grande, 9, 79 n., 80, 144

Mastino II, 12, 15, 117

Antonio, 133

Scamozzi's *Procuratie*, 560

Schism, the, 16, 59, 60 sq., 64, 204 sq.

'Senator Romanorum,' 35 n.

*Serrata*, 3, 115, 125, 503

Sforza family, *see* Table V

Attendolo, 208, 209 n., 210 n.,

260, 261 sq., 279

Francesco (Duke), 19, 210, 220,

263, 278-86

Bianca (Visconti), wife of Francesco, 210

Galeazzo Maria (Duke), 286-9

Ascanio (Cardinal), 290-1

Sforza, Duke of Bari, 286, 290-1

Lodovico il Moro (Duke), 219,

222, 289-304

Beatrice (d'Este), wife to Lodovico, *see under* Beatrice

Gian Galeazzo Maria (Duke), 290-299

Bianca Maria (Empress), 296, 299 n.

Caterina (illeg.), 241, 251, 289 n., 489 n.

Sforza family—*continued*

Bianca (illeg.), 294 n., 301

Maximilian (Duke), 437, 470

Francesco II (Duke), 463, 470, 473-4

Sicily, 67, Table III; 'the Two Sicilies,' 437

Siena, taken and sacked by Cosimo I 491

Silk industry, 117

Simonetta, Cecco, 290-1

*Simonetta, la bella*, 318, 322, 388 and n., 390 n., 518

Sixtus IV, 221, 240-44, 292, 323, 327, 329

Sixtus V, 446

Soderini, Tommaso, 328, 344

Soderini, Piero, 344, 438, 476-81

*Sposalizio* by Orcagna, 193; by Raphael, 537

*Stanze* of Poliziano, 388

*Stanze* of the Vatican (Raphael's frescos), 539-42

Steno, Michele, 122 sq., 213, List 3

*strambotti*, 377

Strozzi, Filippo, 485, 489, 490 and n.

Symonds, J. A., 179 n., 399, 512 et al.

TAGLIACOZZO, battle of, 93

Templars, 21 n.

'Ten,' the, 116, 124, 502-4

Tibaldeschi (dummy Pope), 58-59

Tiepolo, Baiamonte, 7, 116

Tivoli: Rocca of Pius II, 239 n.

*Transfiguration* by Raphael, 543

Trent, Council of, 445

Trivulzio, 303, 437, 499

Turks, 114 n., 132, 207, 213, 214-5, 225, 233, 355, 357, 386, 504-8

UBERTI, Farinata, 3; Fazio, 88

Uguccione, 5, 9, 98, 100, 140, 144

Urban V, 13, 52 sq.

Urbino, 575. *See* Table X, and under Montefeltro, Rovere, Laurana, Bramante, Raphael, Castiglione

Urban VI, 59-63

Urban VIII, 464 n.

VALLA, 369

Valori, 316, 323 n., 337 n.

*Vanità, bruciamenti di*, 340 n.

Vasari, as writer, 70 n., 188 n., 398, 563 et al; as artist, *see* p. 607

# INDEX

Vatican, *see* Rome under Churches  
and other buildings

Vendramin (Doge), tomb of, 423

Venier, Sebastiano, 507

Venetian fleets, colonies, etc., 346-7

*Venus de' Medici*, 495

Verme, Dal, 87, 111, 134; the younger,  
281

*Veronica*, the, 163 n., 467 n.

Vespucci, Amerigo, 388 n., 406

Villani (historians), 138, 168 n., 169 n.  
*et al.*; and *see* p. 608

Villari, Professor, 3, 92 n., 96, 97  
*et al.*

Vinci, Leonardo da; his *Trattato della  
Pittura*, 532; life and works, 530-  
33; and *see* p. 606

Visconti family, *see* Table IV

Otto (Archbp.), 79

Matteo, 11, 79

Galeazzo I, 11, 80

Azzo, 11, 27, 80, 81, 118

Luchino, 11, 14, 80

Visconti family—*continued*

Giovanni (Archbp.), 11, 14, 15, 35,  
49, 80-83, 120, 124, 159

Matteo II, 83

Lodrisio, 81 n., 83

Galeazzo II, 14, 16, 83 *sq.*, 159

Bernabò, 14, 17, 83 *sq.*, 159

Violante (dt. of Gal. II), 85 n.

Gian Galeazzo, 15, 16, 85-8, 111,  
134, 209, 277

Valentina, 87

Giovanni Maria, 209

Filippo Maria, 209, 265-6, 277-82,  
370

Bianca (illeg. dt. of Fil. Maria), wife  
of Fr. Sforza, 278-82, 287 and n.

Vittoria Colonna, *see* Colonna

Vittorino, 371

Volterra, sack of, 321, 334

WENZEL, Wenceslaus (Emp.), 16, 17, 87

'ZORZI' (Doge), 117



















